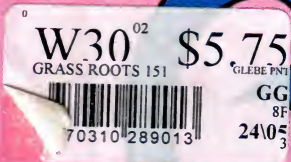


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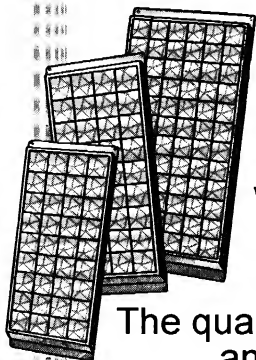
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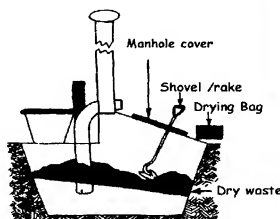
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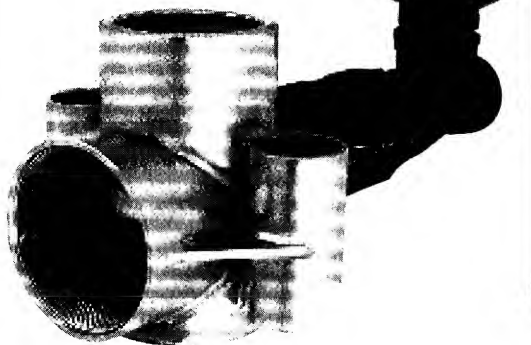
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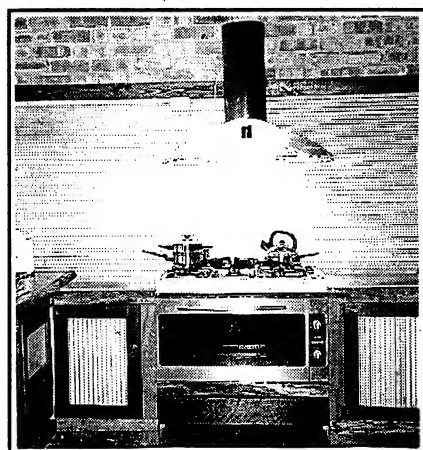
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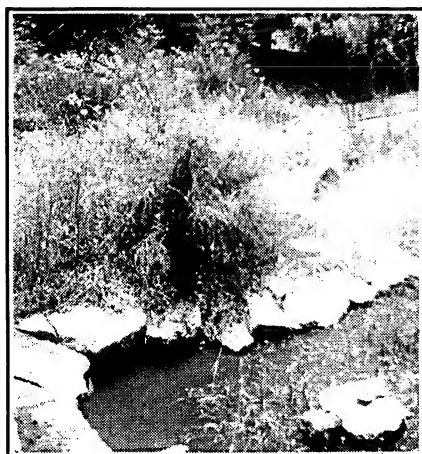
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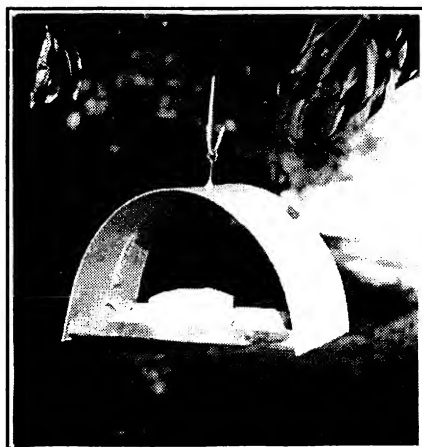
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COVER PHOTOS

Front Cover: Bob Nissen and Perendale ram, junior judge Kelly Ross, and Ethel Stephenson with her English Leicester ewe enjoying a break in the sunshine at the Strong Wool Breeders Sheep and Wool Fair. See page 9. Photo by Marcel Aucar.

Back Cover: Jezeloni had fun bathing Solomons style. See page 6.

Edited by Megg Miller and Mary Horsfall.

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Walking into the office this morning I thought I'd absentmindedly entered the wrong building. A forest of young trees mutely welcomed me. I was sure when I walked through in the dark the previous evening only a tray with tubes of herbs had languished there. How bizarre, but then the comings and goings connected with this office often are.

A few weeks back we shared morning tea with a couple of saucer-eyed puppies. A friend's friend who helps out with our bulk mailing brought in the puppies she had been boasting about. They were impeccably manicured and every bit as good as promised. A pair of smelly roosters, a couple of extras I'd raised for David, made everyone's life hell because he forgot to take them home and they were on site a day longer than anticipated.

There's been an intermittent pong in the vicinity of our tea room that can't be blamed on poultry. One week we had to sit out the back at tea break, the better bred among us becoming greatly distressed by the smell. David valiantly climbed up to inspect the air conditioning and found the ancient remains of a trapped bird, but our smell was definitely rodent based. These little critters have been making our lives miserable. No doubt I've overlooked other odd activities, but considering this is an office, and a busy one at that, it doubles remarkably well as a rural produce store.

The trees? Mary is in cleaning-out mode and we're all going to benefit greatly. Mary and husband Rodney decided some months back it was time for a change and put their property on the market. Mary's garden, as you can imagine, is both extensive and attractive and has been the focus of countless years of work. Their stone house had also been a labour of love. Nothing in our office is private, so when the property went onto the market we unashamedly pestered Mary about prospective buyers and sympathised when despondency crept in. Last week the sale went through and Mary produced not one but two cakes to celebrate. Our editor has been on cloud nine ever since, despite the fact that half a lifetime's accumulations have to be sorted through. Mary and Rodney are

going to have a short-term move before settling into a stylish new place they've designed in a nearby town. No, it definitely won't be in stone. This time round they're happy for someone else to do the physical work, both having mild back problems. We're all bound to become *au fait* with the stages of house building in the months to come.

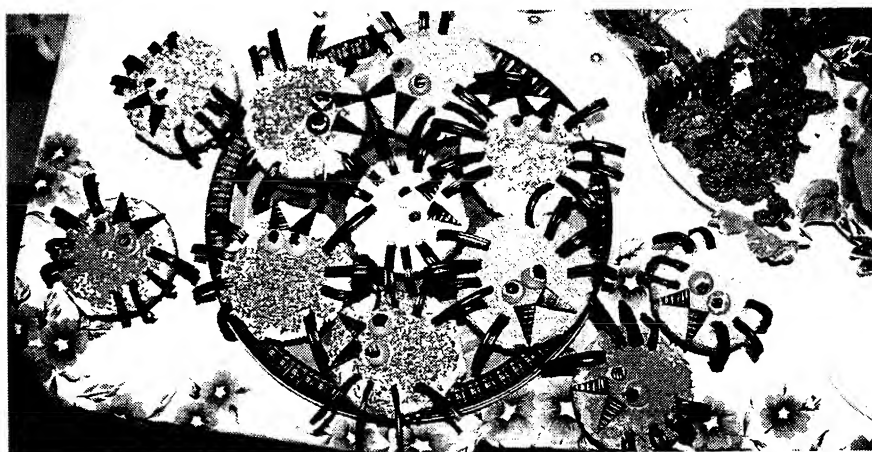
You will have noticed the photo below and it may be appropriate to mention it before moving on from office critters. Those elaborate cakes you can see are spiders, patiently decorated by our Sabrina to celebrate her birthday. There was a rainbow of colours to choose from and despite our preference for healthy fare these disappeared, licorice legs and all, with surprising speed. No, this isn't a new trend, I'm definitely not doing chicken cakes for my birthday.

What of *Grass Roots* in between cakes and roosters and giveaway trees and house plans? Work as usual, what else? We loved our 150th issue and the sincere and thoughtful contributions readers shared with us, and we're pleased with the congratulatory asides on subscription forms and the warm comments on this auspicious issue. Getting down to work on number 151 was a real letdown initially, but the challenge of putting together an interesting as well as informative magazine resurfaced and we were off and running again.

Some notes that bounced through our letter box have been too good to just be recycled. Many of you have been with us for years now and we feel we know you

well. It's clear this is reciprocal. Take Nevin Sweeney for example. 'You probably thought you'd heard the last of me. No such luck! My father passed away in June 2000 and I was glad I was able to show him my Jerusalem artichoke article in print. He was a tough old bushie and lived by himself and perhaps approved a bit of family history being published.' Wolf Schmidt, author of the recent rye bread article, wrote saying he'd hoped to make a small contribution to GR, and was touched by our thanks. 'I am a hard-bitten old cynic, but you had me awfully close to tears. It is nice to be appreciated and I thank you very much.'

There are good times and bad times in publishing, and the last six months have been noticeably difficult. Even some of our advertisers have commented on the contracted economy. So the following paragraph was especially meaningful. 'I guess you know your magazine is a wonderful catalyst and provides an opportunity for diverse people with common interests to belong to a community, even if they may be old and living by themselves. I think religious organisations would find it difficult to match the pastoral care that comes from your friendly readers. It's a lot of trouble running a magazine and I hope you are sufficiently enriched and rewarded in knowing just how much enjoyment and hope you bring into people's lives. Walk softly amongst the trees (and watch out for brown snakes).' Thanks Tony Pearman for your insightful comments and a bigger thank-you to all the friendly readers described. ☘



SIMPLICITY IS BEST

by Beth Montgomery, Wonthaggi, Vic.

***Grass Roots* readers are experts at a range of self-sufficiency skills, innovation and recycling being high on the list. For most of us, it's from choice, not necessity. It's not often though that we have the opportunity to learn from the way these same skills are practised in a different culture, where it is from necessity. Beth Montgomery had this opportunity during four years of living in the Solomon Islands. Here, she shares her observations on a society that is, to our Western eyes, materially deprived but lifestyle rich.**

We all want what is best for our children and often believe that growing up in the developed world gives them the best. I disagree. My daughter Jezeloni and I lived in the Solomon Islands for four years where I worked as a teacher from 1996 to 2000. We experienced a delightful mix of pristine beaches, tropical jungles, simple lifestyles and friendly people. I truly believe it was the best upbringing my daughter could ever have had.

BANANAS GALORE

Food was the most obvious difference between a Western, developed lifestyle and that of the Solomon Islands. The huge variety and complexity of food in Australian supermarkets is mind numbing compared to that available in the developing world. In the Solomon Islands almost every meal was fish and rice, especially on the main island where shops were plentiful. When we lived on the outer island of Makira there was less processed food, but again, less choice. However, people were very innovative with the few types of food that were available to them.

Staple fare on Makira was the banana. There are over 15 different types of banana on the island: small ones; huge ones; bland and sweet; orange, green, white and yellow-fleshed. The villagers baked them, put them in casseroles or soups, and even made a sweet, sticky pudding from them. Others were eaten fresh from the bunch. Nothing was sweeter than a boiled, orange-fleshed plantain as part of the evening meal. And instead of offering your toddler a processed muesli bar, a blackened, baked banana,

warm from the coals of a ground oven, was a common nutritious snack.

Slippery cabbage was another staple food. It's a dark green leafy bush, which oozes slime once cut, similar to okra. Slippery cabbage is used in almost every meal, in much the same way as silverbeet.

GETTING ABOUT

Long journeys by canoe or boat were common. Overland trips were harder to organise. There were only about 12 vehicles, mostly trucks, on Makira, an area of 3043 square kilometres. If you wanted to go somewhere, you waited patiently for a lift (sometimes days), or you walked. Most people walked.

Once my housekeeper and I walked to the hospital carrying sick baby Jezeloni in a 'papa'. This is a sarong tied at the shoulder to strap baby to your body. There was no transport available and the school where we lived was 18 kilometres from the regional centre. It was a four-hour walk under the tropical sun. Plus, we had to wade through three rivers, as there were no bridges. Desperation makes anything possible. Fortunately, the rivers weren't deep, but during the wet they were treacherous.

NEIGHBOURLY NEIGHBOURS

Telephones were rare, and operating ones were rarer still. News was spread via 'the coconut wireless' the Solomon's version of the 'grapevine'. Without a good relationship with the neighbours we would have been cut off from the communication chain. We learned to speak Solomon Pijin in only a few months.

People shared their time and possessions. 'Working Bees' were a way of life. Everyone contributed in the garden. If you didn't help, you would go hungry. There were very few overweight people in the rural areas. Everyone led an active life of gardening, cooking, collecting firewood and looking after children.

Children were central to the whole way of life. My daughter, as a baby, was whisked away from me daily by countless teenagers, boys and girls alike. She would be perfectly safe and was returned hours later, content and fed. The locals were amazed when I told them of the concept of 'stranger danger' in Australia. I guess in our modern 'developed' world we have lost our ability to be a village that raises a child.

ENTERTAINMENT

The generator that supplied electricity to the school only operated for a few hours each evening. One or two houses owned the luxury of a video player. These homes were turned into cinemas in the evenings, drawing people from surrounding villages like magnets. Such entertainment was short-lived though, as the equipment would break down. The locals waited patiently for months before a part could be located, bought and delivered.

Most people were content to live without such luxuries. Children played each day with pull-along toys constructed from old thongs, Milo tins and empty plastic bottles. It was innovative recycling in action. More traditional toys, such as balls and fans, were crafted from leaves of the ubiquitous



Children are carried in a 'papa' while all domestic tasks are done.

coconut. There were always trees to climb, fruit to pick and nuts to gather. Hot afternoons were spent playing on the black sands of the local beach, or splashing in the nearest river. Entertainment was all about creativity, sharing and togetherness.

WAYS WITH WATER

The Solomon Islander attitude to water I found hard to accept. Most villages had a standpipe that ran all day and night. Water conservation did not exist. In the house we lived in people would use a tap then walk away, leaving it running.

Washing machines were a real rarity, so we quickly adapted to hand-washing. My housekeeper showed me how to get the cleanest white socks and nappies simply with Velvet soap and a scrubbing brush. Our house was filled with buckets, some for washing clothes, others for bathing. When we returned to Australia Jezeloni was delighted with the excess space in a bathtub, compared to her usual squashy bucket.



Jezeloni with a teenage friend. Solomon teenagers love the company of young children and are eager to undertake childcare.

OUR LIVES IN AUSTRALIA

Now we're in Australia and, although we still eat a lot of fish and rice, Jezeloni has developed a taste for 'Australian' food. She also has a desire to be driven everywhere in a car, it's such a status symbol for her. When we first came back to Australia Jezeloni would spend literally hours in front of my parents' television each day, totally mesmerised, totally antisocial. She cried when we turned it off. She also had an aversion to hot water and insisted on bathing in cold water in the mid-

dle of winter. This winter she has discovered the delights of bathing in warm water.

Although Jezeloni was raised in a community that was materially deprived, it was rich in innovation, simplicity and co-operation. Living in the Solomons has taught us how to utilise these qualities in our Australian lives. We deliberately haven't purchased a television. If given a choice of watching television next door, or playing outside, more often than not Jezeloni will play outside, no matter



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what the weather. In the evenings we pursue creative interests such as drawing and colouring, we read to one another or play cards.

We have a car that we drive two or three times a week. Most often we use our bicycles or walk. We have found like-minded friends who cycle almost everywhere and grow much of their own food. Their encouragement and help has convinced me to turn our front yard into a permaculture-type food garden so that, just as in the Solomons, our dependence on food from the stores is lessened. We already share and swap cuttings, bulbs and surplus fruit and vegetables amongst our neighbours.

Living in a developing country has taught us to appreciate the luxuries of hot water, electricity and washing machines. But if we have to, we'll certainly be able to cope without them. Our wood heater could easily second as a stove. I know we could function quite adequately without electricity. And as for the washing, well if I did it by hand I certainly wouldn't save time, but I'd probably get cleaner and brighter results. But saving time is a Western world concept. I think when it comes to raising children 'island time' and simplicity is best. ♪



Jezeloni and neighbours inspect a common garden visitor — a 'sleeping snake', harmless and docile.

GERANIUMS

Geranium is a dual nature plant, attracting and repelling different pests. Used thoughtfully, it can draw some pests away from your vegetables.

It is a myth that this plant repels snakes. However, cabbage white butterfly is repelled by scented geraniums, so they could be grown as useful companions to cabbages and Brussels spouts.

Geraniums attract snails and caterpillars, but pepper, garlic and soapy water may be mixed and used to deter these pests.

Japanese beetles attack grapes, corn and roses, but die after eating the leaves of white geranium. You could experiment by growing the white variety in hanging baskets on your grapevine arbour.

Scented varieties of geranium (peppermint, lemon, pineapple and



spearmint) are cultivated in southern Europe for the cosmetics industry. Dried leaves are a good addition to potpourri.

Most geraniums are not poisonous to humans and can be used for herbal teas, or the dried leaves may be added to cakes, desserts and preserves. It is sensible to sample a tiny quantity first as individual tolerances will vary from person to person, and breaks in consumption are recommended. ♪

Helen Bell

Rare Sheep Strutt Their Stuff

by Megg Miller, Nagambie, Vic.

'Come to the fair,' the flyer invited. 'Come to the annual Strong Wool Breeders Sheep and Wool Fair.' Top specimens of sheep would be competing for broad ribbons, spinners and dyers had offered their services to talk about natural fibres, and a range of fleeces, spun wool and crafted garments could be purchased at reasonable prices. To further tempt me, there would be numerous rare breeds on display and the arts of felt making and spinning would be demonstrated. The Strong Wool Breeders Association (SWBA) had organised 14 prior sheep and wool fairs. They clearly knew what complemented the serious side of the day, judging sheep and fleeces, and offered an enjoyable range of activities for smallholders and those keen to learn about sheep.

If, like many, you've long believed most sheep in Australia are Merino, you're largely right. The bulk of fibre-producing flocks are Merino or Merino based. But there are also numerous meat-producing breeds and there is a small group that comes under the description of traditional or British breeds. If you hanker for a flock to keep hillsides grazed and feel your acreage is too small for cattle, look closely at traditional sheep breeds.

There are both long- and short-woolled British breeds and they're generally all ideal for smallholdings. Each was developed one or two centuries ago to suit the specific geographic and social needs of small communities. They adapted surprisingly well when brought out to Australia and several contributed significantly to the very early development of Merinos in Tasmania. Most, if not all, have played an important role in the evolution of the wool and meat sheep industries.

The strong wool breeds on show at the Benalla Sheep Fair included the now rare Cheviot, English Leicester and Lincoln breeds, as well as Romney, Border Leicester and Perendale. All produce long-stapled fibre stronger than 30 microns and with staple lengths varying from 100 millimetres (Cheviot) to 300 – 400 millimetres (Lincoln). These long,



A line-up of breed champions, starting at the front with Romney, Border Leicester, Lincoln, Cheviot, English Leicester and Perendale rams and owners.

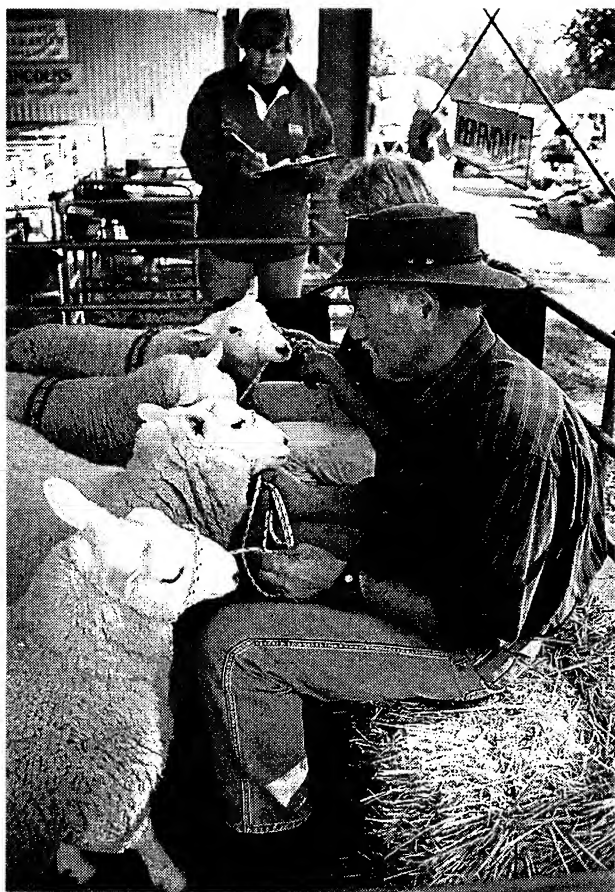
heavy fleeces are prized by hand-spinners and commercially find a small market in the apparel trade and a large one in the carpet wool industry. Don't confuse the above named breeds with those especially developed for carpet wool production, the Drysdale, Carpetmaster, Elliotdale and Tukidale. These were developed from crosses or sports of the British long wool breeds but have unique fast growing modulated fibre that is resistant to compression and so is perfect for manufacture into floor coverings. The fleeces from strong wool breeds are often used as specialty fibre in carpet making, adding lustre and appearance, or reducing weight.

Why would *Grass Roots* readers be interested in rare sheep and in particular, strong wool breeds? Essentially because we need to ensure these breeds are around for future generations. On a more prosaic level, there is sufficient diversity in appearance, size and temperament to suit most people's needs and aesthetics. The breeds are all very hardy, they have retained strong maternal properties, and

are capable of producing multiple births. They have black hooves, a seemingly insignificant feature, but a sure indicator they will cope well in wet or marshy country. Black hooves are 'harder' than white and believed to resist footrot. Breeders claim little difficulty getting rid of excess ram lambs because of their suitability as terminal sires.

Strong wool enthusiasts also say that keeping a pure breed and especially one that can be shown, even if just locally, offers opportunities to mix with like-minded people, make new friends and keep both mind and body active. Anne Harrison from Garfield, Victoria, runs Romneys on 16 acres. She says that the return is nice and that the enterprise keeps her husband David sane. Cheviot breeders Anne and Daryl Sim of Toolleen, Victoria, also breed Maremma dogs. They have found the dogs a quieting influence on the stock and the sheep in turn help train the young pups.

'More breeds are becoming rare so we all have work we can do,' says Ethel Stephenson, breeder and stalwart of



The moment of truth for these young Perendale ewes. Bob and Maureen (obscured) Nissen of Mansfield with their stud stock.



Junior judge Brad Marr discussing the fleece of the Champion English Leicester ewe with breeder Ethel Stephenson.

English Leicesters and the focus of a story on the breed in GR111. Ethel belongs to the English Rare Breeds Survival Trust and has been active in Australia promoting awareness of traditional breeds and the need for their conservation. There are moves afoot to establish a heritage sheep group and Ethel has promised details for publication when an infrastructure is set up. Rare Breeds of Australia Ltd published numerous profiles on sheep breeds in their last newsletter. Membership of this group is just \$30 a year.

So a day at a sheep and wool fair involves much more than just a line-up of perfectly coiffured sheep. It brings the plight of diminishing breeds to visitors' attention; highlights qualities that are prized in small operations, for example tractability and a high reproduction rate; and gives onlookers the opportunity to compare breeds and to ask questions.

Because Benalla was informally organised, onlookers were able to stand close to exhibitors during judging and learn from the judges' comments. Two

young judges, Kelly Ross and Brad Marr, worked under the guidance of experienced old hands, picking up tidbits like: 'Look out for the breadth of head and especially the nostrils. If a ram has to run up hill after ewes and cover a lot of ground he needs big wide nostrils so he can fill his lungs with air.' Or, 'Look to see where a ewe can improve. If there's one that may develop more or improve her wool she's a better bet than one that's developed as far as she can.'

I can guarantee a good day at a sheep and wool fair. There were no noisy sideshows to distract and the concentration of activities in a small area was a blessing for visitors unable to walk far, or for families with toddlers who just wanted a quick look. Tasty homemade fare was on sale to tame the hunger pangs and a barbecue was provided at minimal cost for lunch. This gave exhibitors a chance to put down halters and shears and catch up with old friends. Please, if you get the opportunity to attend one of these friendly events,

jump at it. It might be sensible to bring the stock trailer because if you don't badger a breeder for a sheep you will want to carry your fleece. maybe a spinning wheel and even a shrub or two purchased from one of the other stalls.

Next issue we will examine the Romney and Perendale breeds in detail. ♣

MORE INFORMATION

The Strong Wool Breeders Association Inc holds their annual Sheep and Wool Fair in early May each year. For information contact show secretary Mrs Myrtle McNabb, ph: 03-5768-2266.

Rare Breeds of Australia Ltd has a bimonthly newsletter, promotes breeders and open days, and works to conserve rare and endangered purebreds of farm stock. For membership details contact Anthony Duffy, Lot 20, Mt Blackwood Rd, Myrmiong 3341 (SAE please).

Lavender Dolls

by Robyne Neal, Ballarat, Vic.

Lavender is one of the most useful plants in the garden. Its distinctive lingering perfume makes it an ideal choice to utilise in many fragrant gift items. These dainty lavender dolls make an unusual gift for a variety of occasions.

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Materials

templates

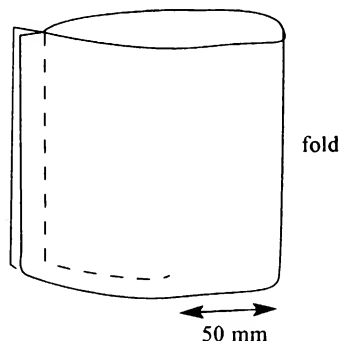
- 12 x 20 cm rectangle
- 8 cm diameter circle

thick paper

- 12 x 20 cm cotton patterned fabric
- 9 x 9 cm white cotton fabric
- 42 cm narrow ribbon
- 40 cm narrow white lace
- 3 cm diameter wooden bead
- pipe cleaner
- paint
- fine paintbrush
- fine fabric or net
- dried lavender flowers

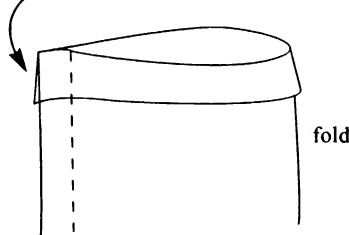
Method

- Cut two templates from thick paper or card, one 12 x 20 cm rectangle and one circle 8 cm in diameter to use as patterns for cutting out the fabric.
- Cut out the rectangle in patterned fabric and the circle in white fabric.
- Stitch a 20 cm length of ribbon 3 cm up from the bottom edge of the patterned fabric.
- Fold patterned fabric in half with right sides facing and stitch side and bottom edges together, leaving a 50 mm gap from the fold to allow lavender bag to be inserted.

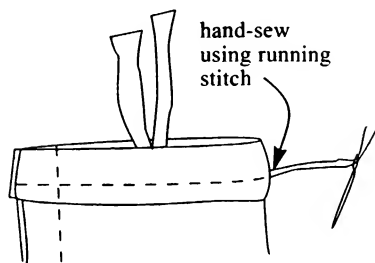


- Fold over 1 cm of top edge to the wrong side and, using double thread,

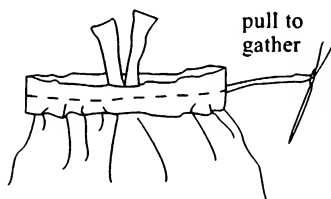
fold over 1 cm



fold

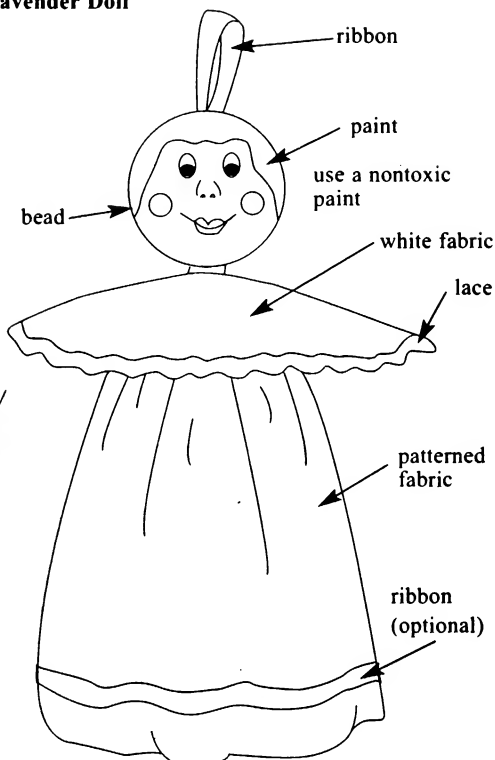


hand-sew
using running
stitch



pull to
gather

Lavender Doll



sew with small running stitches halfway along top. Fold the remaining 22 cm ribbon in half and place loop inside bag with the ends of the ribbon sticking out the top. Finish sewing remaining top of bag without tying off. Gently gather top of bag and finish with a couple of back stitches and tie off.

- Turn bag to the right side through the 50 mm gap left at the bottom. This brings the ribbon loop to top of bag.

- Attach lace to the edge of the white 8 cm circle to make the collar.

- Using scissors, place the tips through the centre of the circle to create a small hole and pull the ribbon loop through.

- Hand-sew the centre of the white circle to the gathered top of the bag.

- Insert a pipe cleaner into the hole in the bead to hold it steady, then paint on the hair, eyes and nose. Paint pink cheeks and a red mouth. Leave to dry thoroughly.

- Once dry, thread the bead onto the ribbon loop. Push it down firmly onto the white collar and then tie a knot in the ribbon to hold bead in place.

- Using a fine fabric or net, make a small bag 5 x 5 cm and fill with lavender or potpourri. Squeeze through 50 mm opening left in the patterned bag (the doll's dress). Oversew opening.

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THE RECYCLING BUG

by Marian Martin, Elderslie, NSW

What a wonderful boon to recyclers the local council recycling program is. I can now place my bottles, plastic containers and milk cartons into one side of a large bin; and newspapers and cardboard on the other and have it taken away each week to be made into something useful. I also have a large green-waste bin in which I can place grass clippings, prunings and weeds. I can hear readers groaning, saying why doesn't she compost, but that's another story.

The green-waste bin will also take vegetable and fruit scraps, but I place these into a plastic bag and keep the bag in the freezer. Once a week I take the bag to a friend who defrosts them and her chooks enjoy the feast. She also shares her egg bounty with me.

I have the smallest size available in council garbage bins and only put this out for collection about once a month, unless I have house guests. Buying few processed foods reduces the amount of garbage generated and helps reduce that which is trucked off to the landfill sites each week.

I sometimes despair about having the recycling syndrome. My house and garage have plastic and paper bags all over the place containing the beginnings of collections for some worthy cause or project. I have the usual used clothing bag which takes simply ages to fill because I usually know someone who could make use of most items. I

have a junk mail and envelope bag for a friend who makes bricks for the fire from shredded paper. And then there are the seeds, enough to make Yates worry about the future viability of their business.

At the moment I have a bag of wattle seed, saved because I thought wattle seed cakes sounded good, but I haven't been able to find out if all wattle seed is edible so they are waiting. I have scabiosa, the original given to me by an avid gardener whose maroon blooms I admired. He assured me that the seed would produce predominantly mauve blooms and only maroon if I was lucky. I was lucky so keep bags of the various colours and plant each year and give heaps away. Echinacea, I have cream and pink. Miniature zinnias, these faithful little plants, were also given to me years ago by a friend in Canberra. Each year I save the seed, give heaps away and always have a patch of hardy colour. I don't have a huge garden so am not into vegies in a big way, but save parsley, basil, capsicum and various other seeds to keep a regular supply.

I used to throw out the film cases after loading my camera, but now find that they make excellent containers for small seeds like poppies, and I can carry a couple in my pocket when walking because you never know when you might pass something interesting

that has gone to seed.

The bird feeder and birdbath encourage birds into the garden who feast on seeds and small bugs and caterpillars and reward me with their early morning singing. I have also planted grevilleas and am visited by the nectar-loving honeyeaters, eastern spinebills, yellow-faced honeyeaters and wattlebirds to name a few.

I nearly threw out a large bag of cardboard toilet roll inserts recently because they have been deemed unsuitable for craftwork. They were 'saved' after I read that they are excellent protection for small seedlings from predators like slugs and snails.

I try to be ruthless sometimes and am eyeing off that basket full of envelopes I have been saving in case I can get some of those fabulous Oxfam stickers for pasting over addresses in order to recycle the envelopes. Some institutions are sending their accounts out in reuseable envelopes and I wonder how many people are taking advantage of this offer.

When my daughters come to clean out my house one day they will despair and mutter, 'Whatever was Mum saving this for?' But I know that much of it will find a new home, just in case it could come in handy for someone else who might have a use for it.

Oh I nearly forgot, the plastic bags and the greywater . . . ♣

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The Versatility Of Rosemary

by Anne Link, Petrie, Qld.

I have a bit of a love affair with rosemary which probably goes back to my school days, when every child received a sprig of rosemary for remembrance. I love its heady, sweet aroma which evokes visions of sunny Mediterranean hills where the blossoming bushes look like blue-grey mist blown in over the fields from the sea.

So I always have bushes in my garden. When they get too big, I cut them back and hang little bundles all through my house. For days I am uplifted by the fragrance. But what do you do with all those jars of dried rosemary sitting in the pantry? They can, of course, be used in a potpourri mixture, but there are many other ideas you might like to try.

IN THE KITCHEN

- A pinch with lamb, poultry, tomatoes, or in a marinade, is great for the digestion and adds flavour.
- Use instead of salt when cooking potatoes or rice.
- Add to pizza dough or any savoury pie pastry for a special flavour.
- Leave a spray in vinegar for up to a month until it reaches the desired strength. Shake every second day. After straining, use in salads and with tomatoes.

FOR GOOD HEALTH

- Rosemary is harmless in small therapeutic doses. The pure oil, however, when ingested in excess can be toxic.
- Put 10 to 20 grams in a litre of red wine for a rejuvenating heart tonic. Leave it for four or five days, shaking it every now and then. After filtering, drink two or three little glasses a day. Good if you suffer from low blood pressure or if you are convalescing after a virus which leaves you feeling depleted.
- Put 40 grams in a litre of red wine. Leave for three days then prepare as above. According to Dr John Rivoliier, *Secrets and Healing Properties of Plants*, drinking this for 20 days will help lower cholesterol. I haven't found

this yet, but it will be pleasant trying!

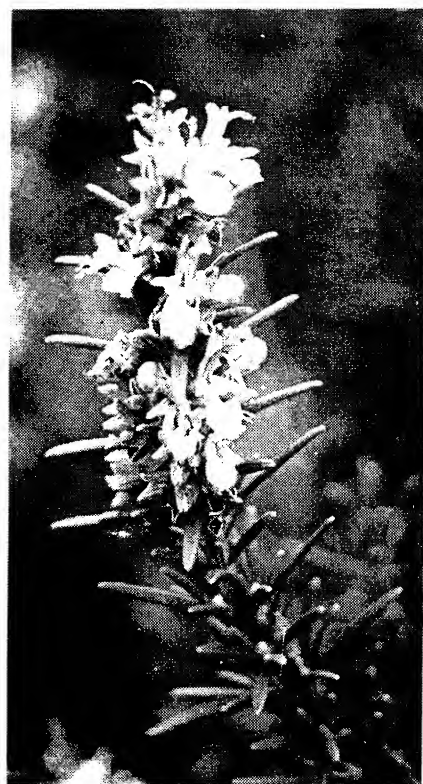
- To aid digestion, pour one litre of boiling water onto 10 grams of dried herb. Let it stand for 10 minutes, then strain.
- To improve your memory, pour one litre of boiling water onto 30 grams of rosemary and prepare as above. Drink three cups of this tea on every tenth day over a period of three months.
- For sleep, prepare as above using 20 grams of the dried herb and drink one cup before going to bed.
- Breast feeding mothers could include rosemary in their diet to help boost baby's immune system as this is a herb that fights bacteria (along with thyme, sage and garlic).
- The components of rosemary work on nerves that govern circulation and the heart.
- It can also be used in a nasal steam bath as it is antiseptic, healing and stimulating.
- In many countries, (particularly European ones) rosemary wine is available off the shelf as its properties are well known:

BEAUTY TREATMENT AIDS

For a hair rinse, put two tablespoons of rosemary into half a litre of water. Collect rainwater for the softest base. Simmer for half an hour, strain, then bottle. This is a good hair conditioner and it brings out the natural highlights of brunette hair. Blondes can add a quarter-cup of chamomile flowers to the recipe to highlight their hair colour.

For a strengthening and refreshing full bath, prepare a decoction as above with 500 grams of rosemary to three or four litres of cold water. Use half the amount for children. After boiling, let it stand for 10 minutes. Strain this decoction into your warm bath.

So now, if you have a pantry full of jars of dried rosemary, you don't have to let it wither and lose its wonderful fragrance. Use it up, or give it to your friends with instructions! ♣



Rosemary is available in bush or prostrate form with flowers in varying shades of blue and pink.

SAVOURY ROSEMARY BISCUITS

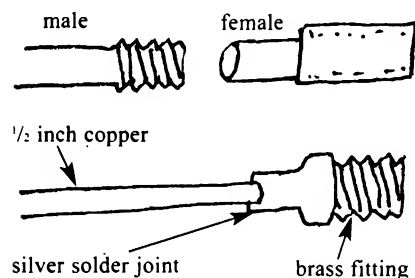
- 2½ cups wholemeal flour
 - ¾ cup olive oil
 - pinch sea salt and coarse black pepper
 - dessertspoon finely chopped fresh rosemary
 - 6 tbsp cold water
- Mix flour, seasoning and rosemary leaves together. Add oil and water, a little at a time. Turn the mixture onto a floured board, roll thinly and cut into desired shape.
- Place onto oiled oven tray and bake for 15 – 20 minutes in a moderate oven until just coloured.
- Cool, store in airtight jar and serve with cheese and chutney. ♣

FIX A LEAKING TAP

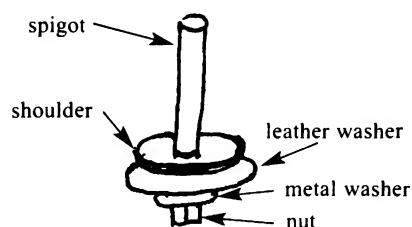
by Kel Connell, Karuah, NSW.



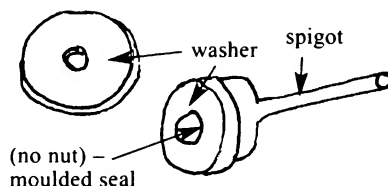
Money can be saved by doing your own repairs providing you know what you are doing. What amounts to common practice by a tradesperson may be overlooked by a handyperson. When a leaking tap needs to be fixed first purchase the replacement tap washer. Most inside taps are $\frac{1}{2}$ inch, which basically means the thread on the inlet side of the tap is made to fit the thread on $\frac{1}{2}$ inch water pipe (galvanised) or, as is commonly used nowadays, the brass fittings on $\frac{1}{2}$ inch copper tube duplicate galvanised steel pipe fittings so taps remain standard.



Outside, garden taps could be $\frac{3}{4}$ inch size or $\frac{1}{2}$ inch, depending on the size of the yard. If in doubt, buy one of each size tap washer, they are fairly cheap.



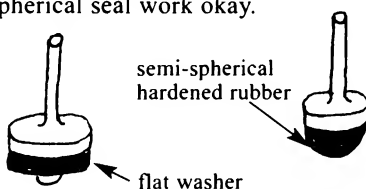
The old-fashioned tap washer slipped onto a spigot against a shoulder and was held in place by a steel washer and nut, or brass washer and nut. It was often possible to cut a circular washer out of leather or rubber to stop the tap leaking (in the old days). In these days of plastic parts, the washer is moulded into a plastic spigot. The modern plastic tap washers fit old and modern taps. 'Hooray' for standardisation.



Note: Taps fitted to hot water pipes require heat resistant washers. As the hardened fibre of hot water washers seems tougher, I prefer to use the hot water washers as all-purpose, for hot and cold taps.

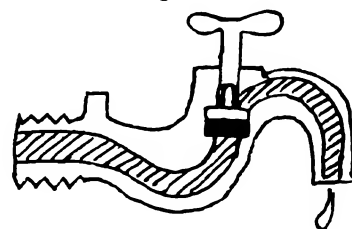
Some older-type tap washers may still be bought with washers held in place with nuts. These nuts sometimes eroded, due to electrolosis, and would fall off. The leather or rubber washer could then cause a blockage in the pipe. Plastic is not affected by electrolosis.

Most modern-type tap washers are a sealed unit (no metal parts) with hot or cold type washers being the main variation. The other variation is one of design. There is the flat washer and the semi-spherical hardened rubber. Both the flat washer and the rounded semi-spherical seal work okay.



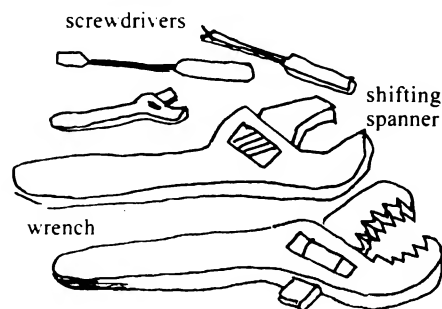
Water travels through the tap in an S-shape, part of this passage has a machine flat surface. Water pressure forces the tap washer upwards, allowing water to progress through the tap while the tap handle is in the open position. When the tap handle is turned to the closed position the washer is pressed against the metal flat surface. The washer, being softer than metal, compresses and seals the water channel - water flow ceases. Continued use over a long period may wear the wash-

er unevenly so small amounts of water leak past the washer and drip-drip-drip. It's not scientifically proven, but many will swear the dripping increases in volume between 2am and 5am. Small pieces of solid matter in the water, such as sand, or rust particles may cause damage to washers. Also, screwing the tap unnecessarily tightly when closing it can cause damage.



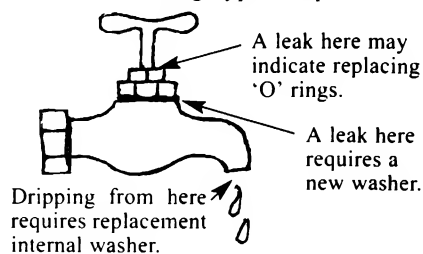
TOOLS

For replacing a tap washer on the old-fashioned taps and garden taps a 250 or 300-millimetre shifting spanner may be the only tool necessary. The modern chrome and plastic indoor taps with decorative handles and covers may require extra tools such as a wrench and screwdrivers - a blade screwdriver and/or a Phillips (star-pointed) screwdriver.

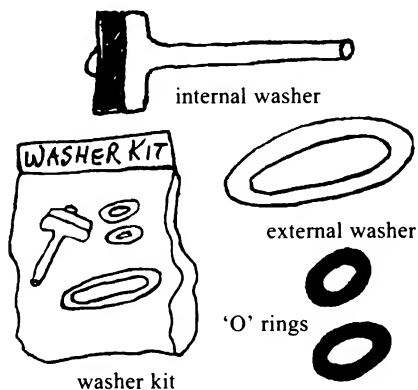


METHOD

First diagnose the problem, locate where it is leaking, type of tap and size.

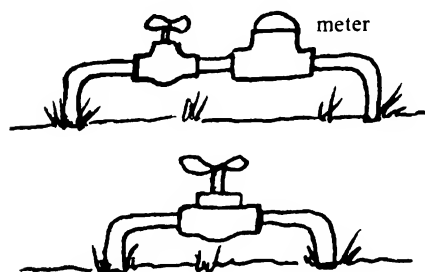


Purchase replacement parts required. They can usually be purchased separately, but often are sold as a kit.

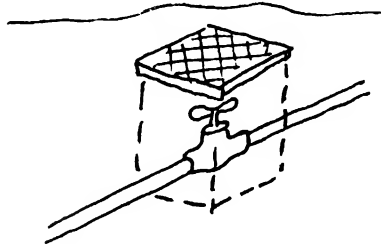


Place tools and replacement parts in easy access to the leaking tap.

The water supply will need to be turned off at the main valve, usually situated just inside your property, where the water supply from the mains enters your property, usually situated



next to the meter. If you do not have a meter, the main valve that controls the water supply may be above ground. It may be underground, but should be accessible and have a cover.

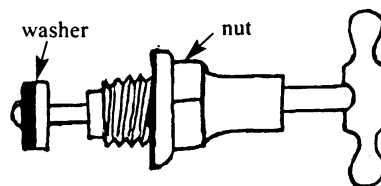


I would recommend that plumbing repairs be carried out when the house is empty. If there are occupants in the house, it may be wise to inquire if they have any plans to use water in the next half-hour or so. You will most certainly be considered thoughtless, among other things, if you turn off the water while someone dear to you is enjoying a shower; especially if they have just soaped themselves.



Having closed off the water supply, open the shower or tap on the highest level. This will lessen the possibility of a vacuum occurring within the pipes, which could cause vibration pipe banging later.

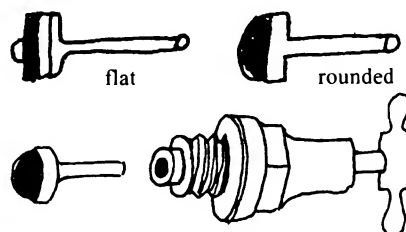
Now open fully the handle on the leaking tap and leave it open. If this handle is closed when apparatus is screwed together after replacing the washer, damage could occur to the new washers (by compression).



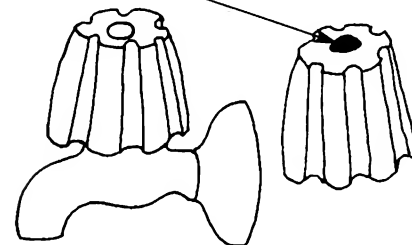
Set the shifting spanner to fit the nut. Brass is a soft metal and we do not want to round the edges and corners of the nut (we must think of next time). Remove the flow control assembly by screwing anticlockwise. Should the assembly be very tight and/or you do not have the physical strength to screw it, try slipping a piece of pipe over the handle of the shifting spanner for extra leverage.



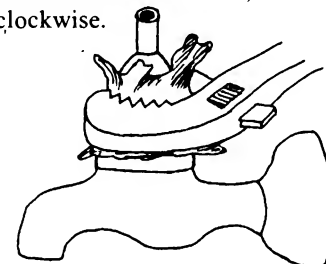
Remove the damaged washer. Place replacement washer into assembly.



With the modern indoor taps with their large coloured plastic fluted handles, the handles must be removed after opening the tap to allow access to the assembly. Using a small screwdriver, remove small cover in top centre of handle.



Inside the recess there should be a small screw or nut, easily removed with a screwdriver or small spanner. To remove chrome housing over the flow control assembly, place a cloth over it to protect chrome from being scratched by the teeth of the wrench, and screw anticlockwise.



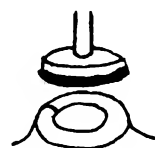
When handle and housing is removed, unscrew assembly as for outdoor taps and replace washer (check internal seating for scratches).

Note: Brass is soft, protect it from damage. Brass taps and fittings are used because brass does not rust.

Reverse steps until tap is reassembled.

Before turning water back on at the main valve, open all taps in the house. Open main valve. Close taps systematically from the lowest tap to the highest. This should purge any air locks within the plumbing. If vibration banging occurs later, repeat purging process; air has been trapped in the pipes, locking water, causing variations in pressure.

If tap continues to leak, the brass seat within the tap, that is in contact with the washer, may be scratched or the new washer may have been damaged by excess compression on reassembly (handle in closed position). If the brass seat is scratched, a new tap may be required.



Wishy Washy Ideas

by John Mount, Woodford, Qld.

I vaguely recall as a child a revolutionary washing machine that used, instead of an agitator to swirl the clothes and water, a vibrator which was supposed to send vibrations through the water, loosening particles of dirt and dust embedded in the clothes. Apparently, the device was not the roaring success its inventor had envisaged as was evident by its disappearance from the marketplace. However, a fellow I know uses a similar principle to wash his clothes. The night before his designated wash day, this bachelor partly fills a large plastic drum with his washing, adds some water and a little soap powder, seals the drum, places it in the boot of his car on its side and off he drives to his workplace. When he returns home that afternoon, thanks to the movements of the car, he has a well-agitated, clean wash ready to be rinsed and hung out to dry.

Sometimes dish washing and drying can be a bit of a chore. A quick and easy method of drying already washed and rinsed dishes is to place a fan or fan heater facing the dish rack. As you wash and rinse, the dishes are being dried automatically. This method is considered much more hygienic than hand drying.

When we lived in Victoria, especially during those cold wintery days when the washing had to be done regardless, my mother would place her wooden clothes pegs in a large ceramic



ic bowl in the hot oven. As she hung out the clothes the heated pegs would keep her hands warm. I remember her 'washing machine' was the large copper, a huge copper cauldron in which

she washed the family's clothes and which had a brick base with a fireplace beneath to heat the wash water. I also remember the large wooden rod which was used to stir and lift the hot wet clothes out of the copper (and which also doubled as a rod of correction for wayward backsides). Although we use a modern electric washing machine, we have a similar wooden rod to remove or manipulate articles in the wash when the water is very dirty, too hot, or too deep.

Another novel washing idea I recall was when a brickie's washing machine broke down and he placed the load of washing (with soap powder) in a large clean metal drum which he sealed and placed inside his cement mixer. The drum fitted tightly in the centre of the mixing flukes of the mixer. Incredibly it worked!

Now, if I could just hook the old washing machine up to the windmill...hmmm! ☘

GRANDMA'S EPSOM SALTS

Our grandparents often had to rely on whatever was on hand to treat health problems. Access to doctors and medical facilities was often difficult in country areas. Even in cities there was not the plethora of over-the-counter remedies available from chemists we have to choose from today.

One of my grandparents' standbys for a variety of situations was Epsom salts (magnesium sulphate). After a hard day of physical work Granny enjoyed a soak in a hot bath with a generous handful of Epsom salts dissolved in the water to ease her sore muscles. This treat also relieved rheumatic stiffness.

A 'dose of salts' (1 – 2 level teaspoons of Epsom salts dissolved in a glass of water) was the accepted 'cure' for constipation – in humans and in animals.

Magnesium in the soil is necessary for healthy plant growth. Magnesium deficiency in plants is shown by patchy yellowing between the leaf veins, often

with red around the edge of the yellow zone; the leaf stays green in a wedge where it is attached to the stem. Epsom salts can be scattered over the soil and watered in. A foliar spray can be made by dissolving half a packet of Epsom salts in 10 litres of water. It can also be added to the compost.

Adequate magnesium in food plants is important to human health. Food plants grown in areas where there is a slight magnesium deficiency in the soil might not show obvious signs of magnesium deficiency, but will, when eaten, provide less than optimum levels of this essential element. Organically grown vegetables have been found to have significantly higher magnesium levels than nonorganic supermarket produce. Areas where there is a high level of magnesium in the soil, such as Walcha (NSW), are said to have greater than average longevity in the population. ☘

June Birkett

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Caring For Older Dogs

by Valerie Willott, Duramana, NSW.

Dogs have been the companion of people for at least 12,000 years and our family is continuing that tradition. We have nine dogs of varying breeds and temperaments. Some are working sheep dogs which appear to be active and happy until the day they die. It is doubtful if they worry about old age and tomorrow as we humans do.

I find that Kelpies need to be involved in any action going. They are forgiving but never forgetting and their buoyant egos can be damaged by harsh or unjust treatment. The terriers are the hunters of vermin and also of my fowls. Both populations have diminished considerably and our eggs are now store bought.

The remaining dogs have been brought home by children after being rescued from death or starvation. All is well while they are cute or the immediate situation has a dramatic appeal, but invariably they all come under my daily care for the mundane tasks. This means that I find myself caring especially for the older dogs. As I am getting older as well I have an empathy with them and find their needs closely parallel those of humans.

The older dog needs to be respected and his place in the scheme of things maintained. In practice this means that I now take the very old, more vulnerable, dogs for a walk separately from the younger boisterous ones who, in rough play, can cause pain to arthritic hips. The questionable bonus for me is that I also am forced to exercise twice a day.

They note my clothing when I walk out the door. If wearing my work uniform, a wag of the tail greets me. If wearing joggers and old clothes, leaping, woofing and wild excitement follows. Plenty of exercise is necessary at any age and helps to maintain good circulation and mobility of joints and prevent constipation.

The older dogs' diet is basically a simple one. I have found that dogs remain healthy on one main meal daily consisting of some fresh meat, fresh bones and whatever the family leave over, especially vegetables. A fresh



Young dogs can often give older ones a new lease of life, but watch that their boisterousness does not cause pain or discomfort to their elderly friends.

egg provides most nutrients and is of benefit if your dog needs a pick-me-up or has lost blood from an operation or other cause.

Supply simple whole foods, plenty of exercise, and ensure fresh water is always available. Add love and respect and you will have the ingredients to enable your dog to age naturally and happily.

If you feel your dog needs a visit to a vet, don't hesitate; most problems can be fixed with simple treatment and good advice. This saves many sleepless nights and 'if onlies'.

Resist the urge to scold older dogs for being deaf or slow, dribbling urine, or any natural part of the aging process. You would not scold your grandparents, so apply the same rules to your best friend!

Old age brings benefits too. A special privilege such as a favourite spot to sleep, an extra bone or special blanket can do wonders for an aging dog. I find that very old dogs prefer to sleep as close as possible to their owner, often preferring to lie on the verandah boards than in a snug kennel in order to be near. This is a gesture of love and a huge compliment.

Dogs gauge our moods and have helped our family over some of the tough times in life and I feel it's part of the deal to care for them as they surely do for us. ♡

There is an excellent book you may find in libraries and secondhand bookshops called *Let's Have Healthy Dogs* by Helen Catherine Cramer (ISBN 0 9592448 3 2) which has advice on natural management including the older dog. It favours the methods of Juliette de Bairacli Levy who in turn is the author of *The Complete Herbal Book of the Dog*.

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Innovative Worm Farm

by Georgie Heart, Woodbridge, Tas.

I began to examine worm farms, some simple methods, others rather complex. I wanted to be able to use the exquisite 'soil' created in a worm farm as well as catch any worm juice. So I bought an old bath from our local tip recycling shop (cost \$15), and a mesh sink plug used to catch the icky bits left in dishwashing water (cost \$1.45).

I placed the bath on bricks – the end with the drain hole is lower (on fewer bricks) than the other end. I cut a plastic milk container in half and put it under the drain hole. I then filled the bath with horse and cow manure, seaweed, sea grass, straw, grass clippings, dirt, old coat, compost, then mixed through about 500 composting worms. These were given to me, though you can buy worm farm boxes for about \$10.50. I covered the bath in an old blanket and moistened the contents of the bath (worms like moist not wet conditions). I then placed a piece of corrugated iron on the top lip of half the bath and held it down with a few rocks.

Two days later I noticed that the plastic bottle under the bath held two centimetres of a dark brown liquid. That night it rained and the next morning the container was full of dark brown, mineral-smelling liquid. Over the next few weeks I noticed the liquid

becoming stronger. That was at the end of winter 2000. Within a few months I had a 10-litre container filled with this amazing garden juice.

I used the juice quite liberally on my garden over spring and summer and had a lush and abundant crop of vegetables, herbs and flowers. Mix half water and half juice into a container and water the garden with this. I experimented and sprayed my broccoli seedlings which were planted at the end of summer. They quickly grew beautiful broccoli heads, deep green in colour, strong clusters in the heads, and pests have not nibbled at them.

The worms turned the contents of the bath into beautiful 'soil' which is great for a potting mix. To remove the 'soil' required I feed the worms from the opposite end of the bath. They move across, leaving the lush 'soil' for me to use. This is a great and economical way to boost the nutrients in your garden.

I have a no-dig garden made with lots of layers of seaweed, straw, cow and horse manure, compost and so on. I planted my seedlings in a hole filled with the worm-made soil, then covered them in a straw and sea grass mix. Watered regularly with worm juice, it seems to have worked and nearly all contents have broken down to create a



Seedlings have really taken off in the worm made soil and I mulch them with a mixture of straw and sea grass.

beautiful soft soil.

So, happy gardening, and just let your imagination fly free, because these crazy ideas just might work. ✿



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GARDEN POOLS

by Neville Jackson, Valhalla.

Water features are an essential part of any garden; they enliven an area with contrast, balance and interest. Herbs, flowers and shrubs planted nearby benefit in many ways from the higher ambient warmth in winter, some low level humidity and the definite asset of fish-pond water, which is rich in microorganisms and nutrients such as nitrogen, essential for leaf growth. Ponds aid frost protection in their immediate area because a body of water has high heat retention and cools more slowly than air does at night.

Part of the early layout for herb, vegetable and native gardens at 'Shangri La' was the essential inclusion of ponds. Close by the front verandah, where 'happy hour' discussion of this day and tomorrow's work was envisioned, we designed the main pond. The dimensions were determined by the width of heavy-duty builders' plastic (used as a pool liner) which is six metres wide on a roll. For this pond we bought seven metres.

We made a graph paper drawing of the pond 30 centimetres deep with a step down at one end and 60 centimetres at the other. The width was four metres to allow for the sides and to tuck under edge stones. Pool length was a convenient five metres on the base.

An area was defined with 'marker pegs', one of our ideas to recycle short lengths of fencing wire looped at one end and tied with strips of coloured plastic or material – very useful for any number of temporary indicator jobs.

While I waited for rain to soften the ground prior to the excavation, we scouted the vicinity for suitable rocks, some large, solid blocks to pin and hide the plastic edge, some as in-fill and support stone. Flag stones were treasured for pathways, while others with special features such as moss growths or lichens were put aside for contemplation and interest. I tell our visitors that I have a lichen for mosses!

'Back-breakers', rocks that I'm not allowed to pick up, were dragged into position behind the vehicle on a skid,

another handy tool made from a sheet of old corrugated iron and a suitably forked log.

A good overnight soak of rain enabled a start on the excavation which took most of that day. The topsoil extracted was used for a raised-bed base and the subsoil for access track repairs. This fitted in very well with our philosophy of two jobs with one effort.

Next day a layer of sand (shovelled through an old bedbase mesh to remove stones) was placed over the base of the pool. This sand protects the plastic liner from roots and allows you to walk barefoot upon the liner without damage.

A large flattish plate of stone was placed to hold the plastic at the lowest point (overflow) of the pool. This was to ensure that during heavy rains no fish or eggs would ever escape to degrade our natural bushlands. A rubble drain led away from this point for water only to escape to the water-hungry bottlebrushes.

After the plastic edges were pinned and covered by large rocks that overhung the pool, an open structure of holed house bricks was laid on a pad of sand in the centre to provide a hide for the fish. On top of this sanctuary, a granite plate

gave extra shade and rest for a 12-volt bilge pump sprayer powered by solar panels on the verandah roof.

Around the pond attractively shaped rocks were arranged as lizard hides. Several hollow stumps were sited near the birdbaths as perches and lodgement places for hair trimmings saved throughout the year for springtime nest material.

After the main construction was completed we found the native soil lacked depth for shrubs so we planted callistemons and hakeas in cardboard boxes strengthened with string. When arranged in place, more bush soil was heaped against the boxes as it became available.

On our property walks after rain we sometimes find small and transferable native plants. We especially choose those found edible by our resident macropods. Some of our native bush herbs and shrubs are uncommon, so a selection in our native gardens ensures fresh seed to distribute back into the bush.

Aquatic weeds were obtained from pristine waters on our property. These plants process nitrates from the fish and oxygenate the water, provide a fish food source and lodgement for fish and frog eggs which adhere to the leaves. All plants brought in from the wild



Ponds sited near the house are a visual treat and have many practical benefits as well.

should be submerged in a solution of permanganate of potash (Condy's crystals). Add a good pinch to a bucket of water, so that it becomes a deep purple-pink colour. Stand overnight and use the water in the garden for it is a good fertiliser. Always avoid any snails from wild sources for they may harbour liver fluke, a dangerous parasite of most animals (us as well).

With the pool finished and no rain in sight we had to empty most of a 4600-litre rainwater tank into it. Several garden pots of nardoo and other aquatic plants were placed in the water. They promptly floated! A handful of road metal was added to each pot for ballast.

A few days later goldfish were introduced to the pond. Soon we found the pots upside down and empty. We'd heard goldfish are not considered really bright, but they had sucked up the small pieces of stone and dropped them outside the pots to reach the nutrient-rich soil and tender roots. Plantings thereafter were weighted down with larger rocks.

Garden ornaments are not usually our thing, but we did buy a small cement tortoise that looked realistic. Some night predator bird, probably an owl, also thought so. Several times it has picked up the tortoise and promptly dropped it into the pool.

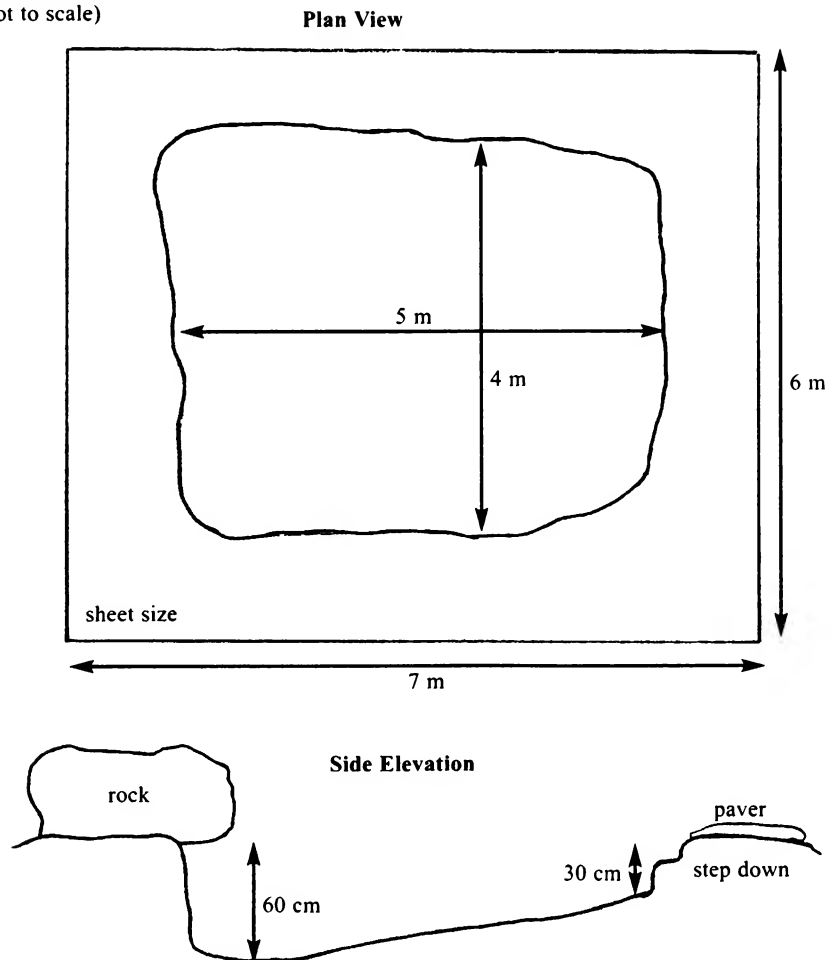
Some time later, after our original eight comets had multiplied, there arose the need for another pond, a smaller one to take extra mouths and a back-up in case of accidents to the main pond.

As space near the verandah was now limited, we decided on a tractor tyre pond. The local tyre depot was only too happy to load one into the trailer. However, always ensure that any tyre is steel-belt free in case the wheel opening needs to be made larger. The tyre wall may be cut back close to the tread with a chainsaw, or perhaps an electric hand-grinder/cutter or sabre saw. These will cut a rubber tyre with difficulty, but the easiest way is to wet the rubber with water and a little detergent and 'saw' the cut with a strong bladed knife (both gloved hands on the knife). To start the cut I drilled several small but close holes.

A site was chosen and dug to suit before the tyre was rolled to the spot. Our tyre measured 1.4 metres on the outside diameter. We made the hole 100

Drawing Of Pond

(not to scale)



millimetres wider because once dropped in the tyre is extremely difficult to adjust. We found it best to have the tyre rim just above ground level to prevent groundwater and/or mud ingress.

A double thickness of black builder's plastic was first arranged in the hole with plenty of overlap which was brought back over the tyre after it was dropped in. The plastic edges were trimmed then securely pinned and hidden beneath substantial rocks. The surrounds were later planted and laid with crazy paving.

Clean river sand was placed in the tyre pond up to the level of the lower rim, then filled with rainwater. If only tap (chlorinated) water is available, it must be aerated for a day or two and poured from bucket to bucket to rid it of the chlorine which will kill fish. Two small water lilies in pots and some aquatic weed were anchored in the sand before two larger comets were introduced.

Another year, another increase in

fish population, so when we saw an ancient cast iron bathtub at an auction we couldn't resist. After a scrub, a moulded-in date of December 1908 became visible. The idea was to have the tub available for piscatorial accommodation whenever the main pool was cleaned out and also to grow water chestnuts. The drain-hole was plugged and a hole where the tap pipe came through the bath was meshed and left as an overflow.

To keep the bathtub mosquito larvae free we gave it one male resident we called Lonesome. The larvae appeared to be more numerous than Lonesome could handle so we gave him a mate. He quickly became Not-so-Lonesome.

Pools, birdbaths and native gardens are all visible from the dining room and verandah and are a continual source of enjoyment for their aesthetics and activities. We wouldn't be without our water features, but always remember to make any water feature safe for young children. ♣

Cosy Knitted Slippers

by Pamela Odijk, Bribie Island, Qld.
Photograph: Herman Odijk.

An elderly lady showed me how to knit the basic slipper shape. She had been making them for years for herself and others, but her design involved crocheting around the top and adding a string with tassels. Instead, I added a ribbed collar on each side of the slippers, mainly because I can't crochet, and because it looked a little more modern and different. They can be made in a couple of days.

They are handy, lightweight, and exceptionally warm. They make an ideal gift for an elderly person, someone in hospital, or are just handy to carry in the side of your travel bag to slip on instead of shoes during those long bus or car trips, and to wear around your hotel or motel room.

MATERIALS

- 2 large balls 8 ply wool in contrasting or complementary colours

The ones in the photograph were made using brown and green 8 ply wool together.

- pair of size 6, 7 or 8 needles, depending on your tension

- Optional is a piece of nonslip material to sew onto the underneath sole of the finished slippers so they will not slip on tiles, lino or polished surfaces, although this can be a hindrance when walking on carpet. Nonslip material is sold for use on caravan shelves to prevent items slipping, or under plates on bed trays etc. It is often available in hardware stores, discount stores and craft stores.

PROCEDURE

The slippers are knitted from the heel to the toe. The shape may look strange at first, but as you progress you will see the slipper take shape. Each is knitted in one piece.

Using two balls of wool at once, cast on 26 sts. Treat each 'double stitch' as one stitch.

Row 1: Knit.

Row 2: K11, P1, K2, P1, K11.

Row 3: Knit.



Row 4: K11, P1, increase in next 2 sts knitwise, P1, K11.

Row 5: Knit.

Row 6: K11, P1, K1, increase in next 2 sts knitwise, K1, P1, K11 (30 sts).

Row 7: Knit.

Row 8: K11, P1, K2, increase in next 2 sts knitwise, K2, P1, K11 (32 sts).

Row 9: Knit.

Row 10: K11, P1, K3, increase in next 3 sts knitwise, K2, P1, K11 (35 sts).

Row 11: Knit.

Row 12: K11, P1, K11, P1, K11.

Row 13: Knit.

Continue rows 12 and 13 to length required measured from heel to small toe (approximately 21 centimetres), ending with a Knit row with the wrong side facing you. Then rib (K1, P1) to the end of the big toe, ending with the right side facing you (about 9 rows rib).

Next row: Knit 2 together across the row.

Break off wool leaving a long tail. Thread this through a darning or larger needle and weave through each stitch and pull the toe together and sew closed, then sew the front of the slipper up to about 13 centimetres from the toe up the front of the foot.

Knit the second slipper.

Before sewing up the heel of each slipper, knit the side decorative collars, using one of your chosen colour. To do this, pick up 25 stitches along each side at the top as you would around the neck of a jumper, but with the *inside* facing you so there is a smooth surface next to the skin when the slippers are worn.

Rib (K1, P1) for 14 rows, then cast off loosely in rib. Fold the collars down over the sides of each slipper and catch the corners with a stitch on the inside in the same colour as the collar.

After the slippers are finished, trace around the soles on a piece of paper, and, using this as a template, cut a nonslip plastic mesh sole for each one if you wish. Attach the soles with a herringbone stitch. If they are hand-stitched, these can be removed if the wearer finds them unnecessary. ❧



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NOT THE 'IRISH STEW'

A Vegetarian Alternative

by Aarn, Karangi, NSW.

When I was a suburban kid winter was a time of dread because our mother used to make 'Irish Stew'. This was a frightening combination of animal off-cuts, bone fragments, sand, the odd shotgun pellet, and potatoes/carrots/cabbage boiled to death. I remember that nauseous sensation as vapours escaped from the beast boiling on the stove, then gagging on lukewarm spoonfuls (congealed fat and all) over the next few days. In all fairness to the cook, she had better things to do than prepare meals for whinging kids. She had to work full-time to support 3.5 others – three of us kids and a lounge lizard stepfather who must have rated 0.5 burden value.

Through necessity, sister and myself commenced culinary explorations very early on (stepbrother apparently inherited a full complement of lounge lizard genes and assiduously avoided stove situations). Sister went on to work as chef extraordinaire in vego restaurants, but my own development was curtailed at the one-pot stage. Anyway here's a recipe 30 years on the test-range.

CHICKPEA DHAL

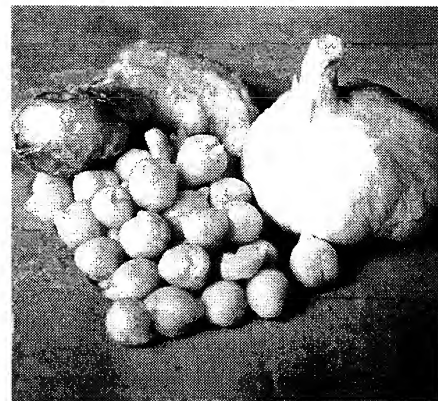
375 g packet chickpeas
2 – 4 tbsp cooking oil
1 tsp 'curry powder'
(or make your own from
chilli/cumin/coriander/turmeric/cinna-

mon/lime etc)

1 – 4 onions
6 – 10 cloves garlic
1 – 2 knobs ginger
375 g packet red lentils
500 ml dregs of homebrew
beer/lemonade/wine, vegetable stock,
whatever

In a four-litre pot, bring chickpeas to boil in excess water, simmer overnight (minimum four hours); the longer the chickpeas cook, the better. Empty pot and drain peas. On low heat, mix oil and spices in the pot. Add sliced/grated/crushed onion, garlic and ginger. Brown onions (approximately 15 minutes), add chickpeas, lentils and dregs/stock. Bring to boil, simmer until lentils disintegrate (30+ minutes), adding liquid as necessary to produce a thick dhal.

This will taste better as it ages (but don't let it get to the bearded stage).



When reheating the dhal, you can add a little water and steam some vegies (but remember, Brussels sprouts really do need to be boiled to death). You can also add nuts, rice, whatever (well, maybe not old boots or mice). I eat it with lashings of condiment, Mae Ploy® yellow curry paste being my favourite.

The perfect accompaniment is homemade drinks, because you'll need to build up your supply of dregs for the next pot. If you add too much curry paste during cooking, your dinner guests may drink up all your homebrew to quench the fires in their throats, then refuse subsequent dinner invitations. Those whose alimentary systems are unaccustomed to chickpea/lentil feasts may find themselves socially burdensome the next day. ☘

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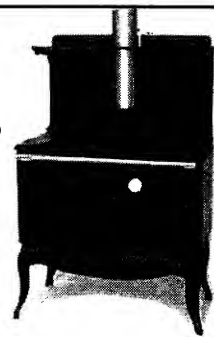
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More Country Scents

by Dianne Warren, Maroon, Qld.

Readers might remember my story entitled 'Country Scents' (GR124), detailing our journey and first few years establishing a self-reliant lifestyle in Maroon, a scenic neck of the woods in south-east Queensland. We're still enjoying our northern lifestyle, warmed by the climate and the support and friendship that has been extended from the Maroon community. Many positive changes have occurred in our lives and city living is but a distant memory.

While we don't have the definite four seasons of a southern climate, I'm always amazed at how the weather patterns can differ from year to year. This time last year we watched as our gardens barely hung on, the grass brown and lifeless, and, as did most locals, we had to succumb and buy water – only to see it rain a week later! But even now, what a difference a week can make. Only last week our dam was low, the creek bone dry, and we were mindful of our water usage from our perilously low tanks. Thanks to some good falls, however, our little place is lush and green and the grass and gardens growing before our eyes. Our ducks are enjoying the almost full dam, alive with the sound of frogs, and once again we have water in our creek. Granted it looks like soup, but to hear it babbling over the rocks is a delight.



My working stint on a neighbouring cauliflower and cabbage farm has almost come to a close until pumpkin and watermelon season, then it's time to get back into my garden. At the time of writing I'm into my second season on the cauliflowers. For the first couple of years after we arrived here all I heard from the locals was that there weren't any work opportunities and there wasn't anything to do! What a joke. Since going back to work I've been inundated with farm work in the local area, and at one point had to turn down work due to other work commitments. The problem with most farms is that they can't get the locals to work and many rely upon backpackers and the like.

Having local work just around the corner is like gold to me. It's a short distance to ride on my bike and a great crew to work with. To be outdoors and be paid for what I love doing is a fantastic opportunity. It also allows time for us to do our thing on our place. We've had great success with our potted herbs, which we sell on our roadside setup. This has been a great boon to us, affording us the opportunity to meet lots of like-minded people as well as supplementing our income. Operating on an honesty basis, my faith in people has been restored. Of course there are those who feel they deserve something for nothing. It's disappointing to discover that there are folk without conscience, but we decided that it really wasn't worth stressing about. Somewhere along the path of life we usually get our just desserts.

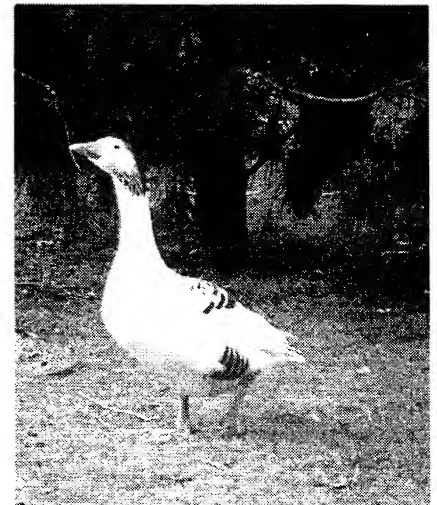
We turned over a growing area to gourmet lettuce, experimenting with interesting varieties. We took our first picking to the Lismore markets, along with fresh-cut herbs, and came home with nothing but full pockets! When I can devote more time to our growing we'll look at the lettuce being an ongoing thing.

With the warmer weather and good rain, all is flourishing, particularly the weeds. We've begun to pick the first of

our peas, which previously I'd never had much success with. An elderly neighbour passed on his secret – plant, then do absolutely nothing! Forget elaborate trellising and just let them ramble and do their own thing. Our beans promise to provide us with many a tasty meal. The sundry varieties of lettuce planted in autumn have been the basis for numerous salads, with loads to sell or use as barter, and our celery just keeps on keeping on.

As I had access to lovely sweet Sugarloafs from the farm, and of course cauliflowers coming out of our ears, our own cabbages were left to grow to alien forms then thrown to the chooks. Quite often my weekends are devoted to poring over my recipe books searching for cauli recipes; there's only so many cauliflower and cheese meals that can be presented to the troops before protest breaks out!

For our family it's been a season of plenty. Often we find bags of snow peas on our back doorstep, courtesy of our kind neighbour who works locally packing them. One day I remember looking at our kitchen table groaning under the weight of fresh eggs, mushrooms, freshly picked bananas and oranges from Flo; caulies, cabbages and carrots from John; and snow peas from Philippa – most given to us through kindness and generosity. This





Dianne Warren's roadside stall in the Fassifern Valley sells a range of homegrown plants and provides an opportunity for socialising with like-minded people.

is true wealth. Forget about having loads of money and the superficial possessions that go with it. I reckon to eat well, have friendships that enrich our lives and an appreciation for the simpler things is what it's all about.

Our local LETS group, Fassifern Interest Group LETS, is now up and running. Membership is slowly increasing through word of mouth and there's a terrific group of people involved, all offering their own special skills and talents. While individually most are utilising the system, as a group we need to organise meetings on a regular basis. Nevertheless, the enthusiasm is there and we're all dedicated to making it work, adding yet another positive aspect to the beautiful Fassifern Valley.

Our chooks are in full swing, laying dozens of eggs which are snapped up by eager folk. Three hatchings of chicks, 23 in total, have emerged from under various bushes and now strut around the garden behind proud mothers. Our new Muscovies have proved to be an interesting addition. Two of the females mysteriously disappeared shortly after settling in. We suspect neighbouring dogs. Another lady

hatched six ducklings, only to have three taken by crows and another greedily devoured by the drake, Sir Lancelot. We've found him to be a bit of a problem, having a fondness for eating chicks, and even his own offspring, which took me by surprise. However, having long ago decided that there's no room for farmyard menaces, I'm planning a tasty meal of duck à l'orange!

After much indecision we are now the proud owners of two geese, Robert and Bosworth. Goodness knows why I waited so long because they're delightful creatures with the most amusing personalities. Of course there was the inevitable settling in period, territorial scuffles with the ducks, getting bushed down by the creek, but I now refer to them fondly as my 'boys'. They wander into my garden for a quick nibble when nobody's watching, then make a hasty retreat when they get sprung, remorseful heads down low as they head back through the gate.

Well, for years now, I've talked about acquiring a couple of piglets and rearing them for our freezer. We were all set to knock up a house of sorts and learn the finer points of raising pigs

when our friends from the local dairy invited us to go in with them. They raise five or six every few months, fattened with any surplus milk, for a total cost of about around \$125 for a freezer full of pork. Meat chooks are also on the agenda, but, like all good things, it takes time and patience – just wish I had a bit of both! But life's sweet. ☘

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Eat With Style When Travelling

by Clare Colins, on the road.

Exploring this beautiful country is good fun, but can be very hard on the budget if you rely on cafés or road-house stops for your meals. With this basic larder of bits and pieces you can feed yourself well and cheaply while away from home.

MUESLI

- 2 cups rolled oats
- 1 cup rice or barley flakes
- 1/2 cup sunflower seeds
- 1/2 cup chopped almonds
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 1/4 cup honey
- 1 cup mixed dried fruits

Toast dry ingredients in a moderate oven for 20 minutes or roast in a pan over the fire. Mix together honey and olive oil and add to dry ingredients. Mix well. Stir in chopped fruits. Store in airtight container. Serve with milk or yoghurt.

CRUISIN' CURRY

- 1 cup dried beans or chickpeas, (soaked overnight)
- 1 onion, diced
- 1/2 cup sundried tomato/capsicum, chopped
- 2 potatoes, diced
- sml can coconut cream, or 1 sachet tomato paste
- 1 tbsp ghee
- chilli powder, to taste
- 1 tsp ground coriander
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1/2 tsp turmeric

Gently fry onion and spices in ghee. Add diced potatoes and fry until brown. Add beans/chickpeas, with enough water to cover. Add sundried tomato/capsicum and tomato paste or coconut cream. Cover and simmer half to one hour or until beans are tender. Serve with rice, yoghurt and home-made chutney.

POSH PASTA SAUCE

- 1 onion, chopped



With the basic ingredients listed below Clare and Paula Colins were able to eat cheaply and well while travelling.

TRAVELLING PANTRY

Dried

- beans, ie kidney or borlotti
- chickpeas
- mushrooms
- fruit, ie sultanas, apples, apricots

Sundried

- tomatoes
- capsicum

Cereals

- rolled oats
- bran
- barley
- rice flakes

Nuts/Seeds

- almonds
- sunflower seeds
- pine nuts

Staples

- rice
- couscous
- pasta
- crackers
- crispbread
- Seasoning & Flavours
- salt & pepper
- chilli powder
- coriander
- cumin
- turmeric
- tomato paste
- coconut cream

Extras

- honey
- olive oil
- ghee

- tinned tuna
- tinned anchovies
- olives

Potted Herbs

- chives
- basil
- oregano
- thyme
- parsley

Buy Fresh (when available)

- potatoes
- onions
- greens
- eggs
- yoghurt
- cheese
- sour cream

With these ingredients you can make a whole range of tasty meals. We hope you enjoy some of our tried and tested favourites.

2 tbsp sundried tomato/capsicum, chopped

2 tbsp chopped olives

1/2 tin anchovies

2 tbsp pine nuts

2 tbsp sliced mushrooms, dried, fresh or tinned

1 tbsp ghee

Gently fry onion in ghee. Add remaining ingredients and simmer for 5 minutes. Serve with spaghetti or pasta topped with shaved parmesan or grated cheddar cheese.

CLEVER COUSCOUS

1 packet couscous

sml tin tuna, drained

1/2 cup sundried tomato/capsicum, chopped

chopped chives

salt & pepper

Make couscous as directed on packet. Add remaining ingredients and stir to warm through. Serve with crunchy

green salad, if available.

HERBY, CHEESY SCRAMBLED EGGS

1 tbsp ghee

1 tbsp chopped herbs

1 egg per person

2 tbsp grated cheese

1 tbsp sour cream

Melt ghee in pan. Mix together eggs, herbs, cheese and cream and add to melted ghee. Cook three to five minutes, stirring well. Serve on toast or with crackers or crispbread.



POTATO WEDGES

1 potato per person

small amount of olive oil
salt, pepper, chilli powder

Wash spuds and cut into wedges. Heat olive oil in baking tray and add wedges, coating well in oil. Sprinkle with salt, pepper and chilli powder. Bake 20 minutes in a moderate oven or roast on the open fire. Serve with sour cream and salad.

TRAVELLING TIPS

Take as much from home as you can. Before you leave, pickle those baby vegies, turn that fruit into jam or chutney, dry those tomatoes, capsicums and chillies. A dollar saved is another kilometre you can travel.

Try to meet up with GR folk along the way and trade a little labour, home-made jam or seeds for fresh produce. Good food and company will keep your spirits up while you're away from friends and home.

Happy travellin'. ♪

Bananas – God's Gift To Home Brewers

by Bob Rankin, Narrabeen, NSW.

If you want extra clarity and body in your home-brewed beer or wine, look no further than bananas. I have found that in home brewing, as in just about everything, simplest is best. I first noticed something special about bananas when I was brewing fruit wines. The wines that had banana in them cleared the most quickly and seemed to have better body. When I started incorporating banana in beer I found exactly the same thing. A slight banana taste came through in the beer, but no matter. I thought the flavour was improved.

Keep using your Irish moss or egg white if you must, but, if you use bananas as well, your brew will achieve star brightness faster. It is very important, though, that you use bananas that are fully ripe or, better still, overripe. Bananas that are not ripe will have the opposite effect.

For a 23-litre brew I peel about 4 – 5 kilos of overripe bananas, put them in a muslin bag, and boil them in about 10 litres of water for half an hour. I usual-



ly boil up my crystal malt in the water at the same time. You then strain the water into another container, add the rest of the ingredients, simmer for around an hour, then pour into your fermenting vessel. Add cold water to make to 23 litres and add the yeast when reasonably cool.

Ingredients

2.5 kg liquid malt

500 g honey

250 g crystal malt

90 g hop pellets

1/2 tsp Epsom salts

I use honey for its medicinal value. My wife reckons the more I drink of this the better because I haven't had a cold since I started imbibing my banana/honey beer. What more could a beer drinker want? ♪

Helping Cabbages Get Ahead

by Robert Millet, Coffs Harbour, NSW.

Most of us want to succeed in whatever our endeavours, and I feel that cabbages want to get ahead too, and for them it is to produce a big solid-hearted head free of bugs and holes. They are trying to put their best foot forward, so to speak, by growing to be the best cabbage anyone has ever seen. Why, one could even make the exhibition shelf of the Royal Show, and might, just might, mate, wear that blue ribbon!

Yet we gardeners know different. The 'low down bug brigade' is a ruthless mob who up and tear and munch their way through any little green shoot that dares to unfurl its tender leaves above the dark soil into the light. So how can we protect our youthful cabbages to enable them to become what they want to be – huge solid-hearted specimens of the Brassica clan?

Because I wanted to clean the bugs out of my cabbage patch I went to the local laundromat. They use heaps of cleaning agents which come in those wonderful 20 – 25 litre translucent plastic containers. Also try pubs and nightclubs – spirits come in similar containers, as do floor cleaning products. I loaded the van with a few dozen and was off home where, with a jigsaw, I cut off the tops just where the top curves to meet the sides. After a good rinse out, I drilled several 10-millimetre ventilation holes over the bottom and my cabbage castles were complete.

In the garden I cleared away the mulch and set the plastic container over the small plant, then tucked the mulch up against the mini-greenhouse. To help hold it down I put a half-brick on top. If you live in a very cold place, try putting two bricks next to the plant. During the day the sun warms the interior and heats the bricks. At night the plastic insulation keeps the wind off the cabbage and the bricks release their heat to stimulate growth.

Try to inspect the plants weekly while you are watering, and when they have nearly filled the containers, remove the mini-greenhouses in the



Some people will go to any lengths for their brassicas. These broccoli plants are thriving after the removal of their individual hothouses.

evening, remembering to tuck in the mulch. Give the plastic containers a rinse and store out of direct light because UV rays cause plastic to go brittle after a few years.

Hold on, you say, take off the covers? Let those dreaded white butterflies lay their eggs? Soon their caterpillars will make short work of the plants! Never fear, there's more than one way to defeat the insatiable bug brigade.

After the mini-greenhouses are off, drive in four or more stakes at the edges of the plot or row and cover the entire cabbage patch with 12-millimetre mesh bird netting so that no parts of the mature cabbages will touch the net. Use bricks or flat boards to hold the edges down tightly. Now the plants can expand and thrive with sun, rain, and

breezes coming through the mesh, but no butterflies. In fact, they will try their hardest to get in, for they can smell the delicious leaves where they just know their eggs ought to be hatching. But they won't get in, and the cabbages will grow huge while they flit about fighting for an entrance. To harvest a cabbage, lift the mesh, cut the stem with secateurs, and drop the outer leaves on the soil for mulch. Easy, and it works – no chemicals, not even a whiff or a hint of any BT compound.

So, smile with pride and enjoy your cabbages (or sauerkraut), tomatoes, or whatever plant species you have protected with this low-cost recycled plastic mini-greenhouse. And who knows, perhaps one of your vegies might win you that Royal Show blue ribbon. ♡

PRIDE AND ACHIEVEMENT

Fitting Out The Inside

by Denise Jones, Leeton, NSW.

After the outside of my house was finished, as I told you about last time, it was time to move inside. Fitting out the house started with standing the pre-made wall frames.

I lined the ceilings with gyprock in all the bedrooms and hall. Bedroom one was lined with cypress lining boards and looked quite effective. The hall was lined with gyprock and V-joint pine lining. The opposite side was all doors. The bathroom was lined with timber and tile. In the toilet I went for something a bit different, a combination of cypress lining boards and Zinalume mini-orb, which was 1100 millimetres in height. The laundry featured one wall of ivory mini-orb and cypress lining boards sealed with semi gloss finish lacquer.

Because I had chosen to have the string-line on the outside edge of the blocks, it made the inside look a bit rough. To disguise this a friend and I chose to cover the inside block walls with Porter's Roman Cement. The Roman Cement is a coloured render mix which is supplied with a premeasured oxide blend. I mixed it in the cement mixer and applied it with a trowel, then lightly wiped it over with a wet sponge. We used this in each room of the house in various colours. We were very pleased with the early feel. It was also the first time my friend and I had tried rendering; we both felt like professionals by the time we had finished.

At a point in the building process I started to get a bit worried about the amount of money I had left. The theme and feel I was trying to create was early Australian country. I wanted a timber kitchen, but thought \$10,000 to \$12,000 was definitely out of the question. I asked myself what would people have done in the early days, and my answer was to use what they had around them. So I set out to create my pride and joy, my timber kitchen. I had



The kitchen showing Zinalume mini-orb in cupboard doors and back of stove area, slab benchtops, and rendered wall on the left.

an idea in my head of what I wanted, timber that had a real rustic look and effect. Sometimes I find I can have an image in my mind and know what I want, but cannot describe it in words. I have learnt that if I can just accept that part the rest will come in time. And it did, I went to a home and furniture show, walked in the door and there it was, the exact thing I was looking for. I made a beeline straight for it, bypassing everything else on the way. It was rustic looking timber with colours of black, tan or rust and beige. It had been made into picnic tables and chairs and a bar with rusty iron on the top. The bar with the rusty iron was just the look I was after. Now came the tricky bit, to find out whether I could just buy the timber. The answer was yes. All I had to do was work out how much I wanted and let him know. I was so excited that it felt like everything else at the show was uninteresting, all I could think about was this timber for my kitchen.

Designing and working out the kitchen was a bit of a challenge. Working out measurements for doors, making sure that the spacing looked even and balanced was also a bit tricky, as well as allowing spaces for dishwasher, oven, cooktop, fridge and sink. The timber was hardwood offcuts from timber used to cut railway sleepers and came from the north coast area. I used half rounds as the front of a breakfast bar, only higher to divide up the kitchen-lounge area. These were 150 millimetres wide and 1200 millimetres high. I also had 75 x 75-millimetre posts with 75-millimetre pieces used in the front between the posts. I had the timber delivered, but it was a while before I actually started because I had the plan in my head and it seemed to take forever before I could get it out of my head and on paper; I also had difficulty deciding where my starting point was going to be. I had made another challenge for myself by having the

smaller 75-millimetre pieces that were to go between the posts of varying thicknesses. It was like fitting a jigsaw together to make everything look as even as I possibly could by matching the pieces when they met end to end. Also, the colours varied, so I was also colour co-ordinating to get the effect I was after.

When I finally found my starting point I had a basic plan. I thought the rest would work itself out as I went. I measured and marked out where things would go, stood the posts after they were notched out and fastened to the concrete floor. For some of the main frame on the inside I used radiata pine; to this I stood the 150-millimetre x 1200-millimetre pieces matching sizes and colours as I went. Here I had to predrill each piece top and bottom to get the screws in. This timber seemed harder than cement and there were a lot of feelings of frustration in working with it. It was a very slow job.

I used 75-millimetre x 12-millimetre cypress boards for the shelves of the kitchen cupboards and the wardrobes and linen cupboard. I got this really cheap from a timber yard. My design varied a bit from my original plan. I was initially going to have rusty iron to make an awning out from the wall above the top cupboards, but I decided to use Zincalume mini-orb using recycled 15-centimetre hardwood flooring boards which I ripped down the middle to make an outside frame. Then I cut Zincalume mini-orb for the inserts. When it came to the benchtop I saw an advertisement for hardwood slabs in the paper, also from the north coast area. The colouring was a rich tan/red with a fine grain.

The day finally came when I was ready to put the first benchtop on. I felt really excited, but also a bit apprehensive because when it came time to cut it I knew I was only going to get one go at cutting, so it had to be right the first time. They say measure twice, cut once. I must have measured four times. The finished measurement was three metres long 600 centimetres wide and 50 millimetres thick. I had only my friend Judy there that day so I asked could she help me move it so I could cut it. Well, we pushed and pulled, moaned and groaned. Finally, we got it far enough outside to start cutting.

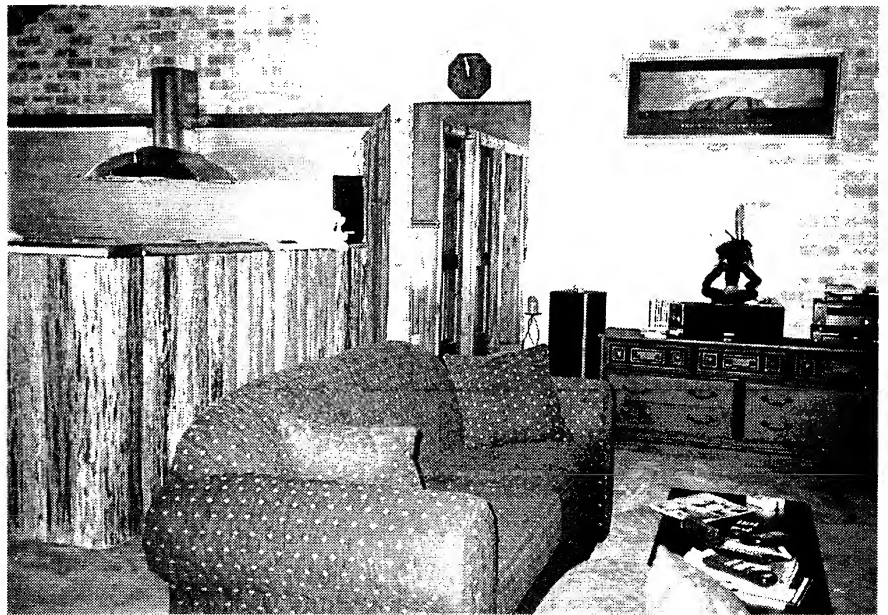
Then it came time to put it in place. I told Judy that we should be able to lift it now because I'd cut some off. Judy couldn't do it, her back gave out. I wasn't going to be beaten. The next step was to call for man-power. I made several phone calls: to my sons, father, and anyone else I could think of. No one seemed to be home. Finally I got my uncle to come over and between us we managed to get the slab in place. Yes, it fitted perfectly. At last we stood back and looked at it from all angles; it was finally coming together. The outside edge of the bench was the natural curve from the tree and looked really effective with the uneven shape of the timber underneath. Next came the job of sanding it back. The slab also had a few spots that needed to be filled. I used sawdust from the slab mixed with clear lacquer and packed it in the holes, sanded it numerous times and finished it off with a marine two-pack which gave it a glass-like finish as well as protection. In the end my kitchen cost around \$1000 (not counting appliances etc), and was well worth the effort.

I was living in the house by this stage and was finding the cement slab always looked and felt dirty. My friend Judy had kept a clipping she found in an old newspaper which had a recipe for sealing concrete. It was melted beeswax and turps. She played around with coloured oxides added to it and

achieved a coloured finish and effect of old leather. The mix had to be painted on warm; that meant putting the mixture in an old pot on a mobile burner. It proved to be an extremely durable finish. By the time we picked up some black iron curtain rods and calico curtains the house was really starting to have a charm of its own, never failing to receive positive comment from all those who walked through the door.

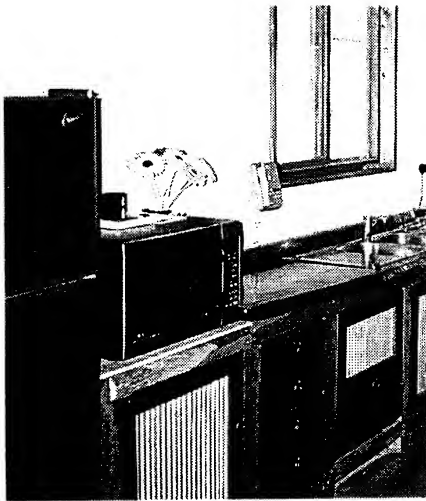
I guess what people want to get from reading about other peoples' experiences is what is learnt from those experiences. Some of those I can share with you, some are just experiences that words cannot describe, I can tell you that if you want to take on the challenge of building, go for it, do some research. If you know anyone who has built a home, talk to them about their experiences. For me it was a personal growth experience. You might call it character building. Make sure you always get more than one quote, check out their work and shop around for prices, they can vary so much. Something that was important for me personally was learning that everything works out in the end. If I couldn't come up with or see a solution at first, I'd leave it. It always worked out.

If you live in the house while you are building, be aware that you will be living in some chaos, or, as a friend put it: 'it is glorified camping'. Being an



The front of the breakfast bar was made from half-round offcuts of railway sleepers. Zincalume wall and rangehood in kitchen can be seen in the background.

WHAT'S ON



An extra view of the kitchen.

owner builder and doing it yourself does save a lot of money, but don't expect it to happen overnight, it can be a slow process which can have positive outcomes. I also found that when you are living in it while building your perception on paper of how it will be can be completely changed when you are actually in it. You can make some changes along the way to suit your lifestyle. You may ask whether I would do it again. The answer is definitely yes; it only gets easier. It has led me to my next venture of renovating a house, which is near completion. One of the most exciting outcomes from the experience is that it has led to a new career as a property stylist.

Denise can be contacted on 02-6953-2666. ☘

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Outdoor events are slowing down a bit now the nights are closing in and the temperature is cooling. There are still plenty of activities taking place indoors, so don't let those brisk mornings put you off.

BRISBANE'S ORGANIC MARKET

Brisbane now has a great weekly organic produce market to enable local people to enjoy a wide range of fresh organic produce in one central location. The market is being held in the shady park area on the corner of Northey and Allom Streets, Windsor. Northey Street Organic Markets started up in February and will be operating every Saturday morning from 6am to 10.30am. The markets specialise in certified organic fruit, vegetables and preserves from local farmers, and even some not so local who are travelling from as far away as Kingaroy, Lismore and Maryborough. Anyone who might be interested in operating a stall at the markets, please contact David Whyte on 07-3891 9489.

HUNTER BIODYNAMIC GROUP

The group has a number of field days, workshops and educational events in store for anyone who would like to learn more about biodynamics. For example, on Saturday, 15 June there will be a field day (for just \$2 per person) at Carmel & Bill John's Paterson farm focusing on cattle production, with worm farming, composting, free range chickens and chicken tractor, as well as home production of herbal cosmetics. The AGM is set for Friday, 26 July and includes a talk by Dr Matthew Colloff from the CSIRO's Entomology division. Contact the group on 02-4938-5308 for full details about this and other forthcoming events.

CRAFT & QUILT FAIR

The Needlework Craft & Quilt Fair moves on to Sydney's Exhibition Centre from 26 to 30 June, and Melbourne's Exhibition Centre from 25 to 28 July. Visitors to the Melbourne Fair will be able to see the European Art Quilts tour for 2002, comprising 50 unique art quilts. Margaret Rolfe's lat-

est patchwork patterns will be displayed, and so will Mandy O'Brien's stunning embroidery. Both fairs are to feature Nerida Singleton, Australia's best known decouper, who will be appearing at the fair and there will be an exhibition of her work. Sue Leighton-White's collection of Japanese work garments, dyed in indigo and simply but superbly stitched, combines with Wendy Lugg's contemporary art quilts to make the Common Threads show. Sydney visitors will be able to enjoy a visit from Mary Ellen Hopkins, famous US quilter, who will be sharing her clever, quick techniques. Also the Quilt Show, the annual event of the Quilters Guild, is on display. The fair moves on to Canberra in August. Contact Ben Porter on 02-9939-4445 for more details.

WOLLONGONG EXHIBITION

This year's annual exhibition of the Wollongong Handweavers and Spinners Guild is taking place on Saturday, 22 June from 9am to 4pm at Fairy Meadow Community Hall, Princes Highway, Fairy Meadow. Works will be available for sale and entry is free. A fashion parade will take place at 12 noon.

SUSTAINABLE DISPLAY HOME

The CitiPower Sustainable Energy House has been renovated and now boasts working examples of grid interactive PV power system, passive solar extension additions, displays of insulation, energy efficient appliances, low embodied energy construction, natural floor coverings/finishings, urban rainwater harvesting, Wattworks greywater system, permaculture garden with low water tolerant plants. The house is located at 8 Lee Street, East Brunswick (at CERES Community Environment Park) and is open to the public every Saturday from 10am to 1pm. Entry is free and a sustainable building consultant is available during opening times to answer questions. Other attractions at CERES on Saturdays include the organic food and craft market, a nursery, CERES café and the VUT Chinese Medicine Clinic. ☘

Simple Oil Lamps

by Ieyan McQueen, Airlie Beach, Qld.

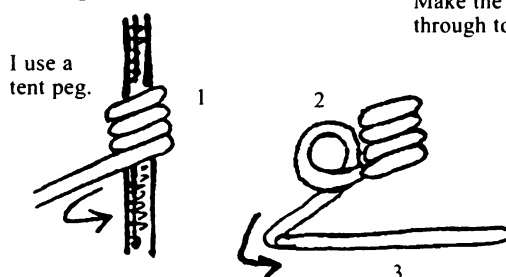
You don't need to be crafty to make this easy lamp and you will have the satisfaction of recycling.

These oil lamps are easy to make, safe, clean, cheap and use recycled materials. They are great for camping trips and outdoor living areas, as well as for those hardy self-sufficient types living without grid power. They are cheaper than using candles. You can use any second-hand oil from cooking. If a local take-away food shop is willing to save their used oil for you, a 30-litre tin will just about last a lifetime. Of course, new oil burns brighter and cleaner.

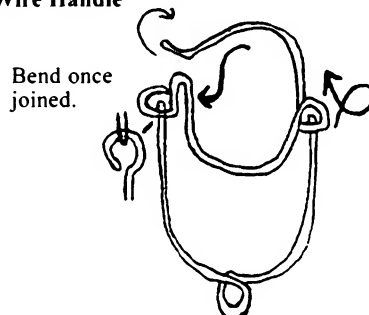
TIPS

- When lighting the lamp it is not necessary to get the whole wick burning, just a very small flame will suffice to start it. The flame will increase once the wick is placed back inside the jar.
- If any odour or fumes are produced the flame is too high – adjust it down. A high flame will also overheat the jar.
- If the flame decreases during use, the oil might need topping up, or ash removed from the top of the wick.
- If the lamp has been hung while in use, the wire handle will get hot. We use old meat hooks to move them about if this is the case.
- Never use manufactured lamp oil or any other petroleum or alcohol-based fuel.
- The wick can be a purpose-manufactured one, but any pure cotton or hemp fabric can be used. Other fibres melt and clog.
- The lamp can't work with the lid on.
- If knocked over, the flame will be extinguished by the oil.
- If left burning the flame will burn out safely.
- Level of oil in the jar can vary as long as the wick protrudes the surface. I keep the level at about the base of the

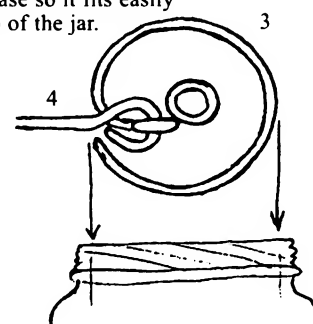
Making Wick Holder



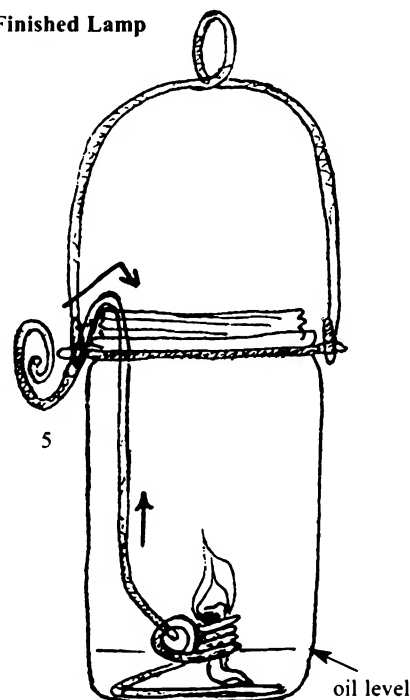
Wire Handle



Make the base so it fits easily through top of the jar.



Finished Lamp



coil (see diagram) so as not to extinguish the flame during movement.

- Before lighting wick, top up oil and knock off any ash remaining from previous use. Squeeze out excess oil from top of wick to aid in lighting.

MAKING THE LAMP

First select a jar. Size affects size of flame, light and heat. This is the simple and easy way I've found to make the wick holder.

- Bend wire to make coil (1).
- Make upright loop at base of coil (2).
- Bend wire down and round to create stable base (3).
- Attach a second wire to upright loop (4).
- Bend this over rim of jar. This arm lets you access the wick for adjusting, lighting or replacing while hot. It's best to have the arm hooked over rim while

the lamp is in use, though bent so as to sit inside with the lid fitted so as to prevent spillage when not in use (5).

- To make a handle that folds down: make a loop, reverse wire, make another loop on other side. Pull tight through the reverse bit and attach second bit of wire as handle. ♡

CUMQUATS

by Gaelle Murray, Pialba, Qld.

The cumquat tree has been cultivated in China, Japan and Malaysia for centuries. It is a small tree with small, round or oblong fruit. There are about four varieties readily available in Australia. They require rich, well-drained soil and thrive on organic manures. The skin of the cumquat is very edible.

These trees are ideal for topiary work and can be cut and trained to any shape required. Cumquats make excellent pot plants and will fruit prolifically grown this way. Propagation is usually by budding and grafting onto seedling rootstock. Trees grown by cuttings may not survive for very long.

These small fruits can help those who suffer from high blood pressure. One or two after each evening meal should be eaten. Since they are both sweet and sour in their rinds and quite tart in their pulp, they appear to be an ideal snack for overweight subjects, as they satisfy both sweet and sour cravings at the same time.

Below are two recipes for cumquat preserves.

CUMQUAT MARMALADE WITH GIN

1½ kg cumquats
1½ lt water
2 kg sugar
125 ml gin

Cut fruit in half, removing and reserving pips. Soak fruit overnight in 1½ litres of water, also soak pips overnight and separately in the remaining water. Add the water from the pips slowly to the rest of the fruit and simmer until peel is soft.

Add sugar and boil rapidly until setting point is reached. Cumquat marmalade tends to cook very quickly. Add gin, stirring well. Leave to cool, then bottle and seal in the usual way.

The gin can be substituted by using any of the following: kirsch, brandy or whisky in equal measure – or 100 grams of ginger which must be added at the same time as the sugar.

CUMQUAT JAM

500 g cumquats
6 cups water



sugar

Wash fruit and slice finely. Retain pips and tie in a muslin bag. Cover fruit and pips with water in a non-metallic bowl and leave overnight.

Next day, boil until fruit is soft, about one hour. Squeeze and discard bag of pips.

Measure pulp and add 1 cup of sugar for each cup of pulp. Stir to dissolve sugar. Boil briskly until setting point is reached. Bottle and seal. ❧

PRESERVING CUMQUATS

Don't forget about preserving cumquats. This is another great way to enjoy this flavoursome, slightly acid fruit. Usually they are preserved in a light sugar syrup, as this helps to maintain the flavour and colour of the fruit.

Prior to bottling hard fruits such as cumquats, it is best to soften the fruit. First, barely cover the fruit with water in a preserving pan and boil gently until tender.

Make up a light sugar syrup using the strained liquid in which fruit was cooked. To each litre of liquid add 250 grams of sugar. Simmer for 10 minutes. The strained, softened fruit can then be covered with the syrup. Place a lid on the container and leave overnight.

Next morning, fill prepared bottles with fruit. Bring the syrup to the boil,

then strain through muslin and fill the bottles right up. Clip lids and place jars on a wet rubber mat in a deep water pan. Then boil jars to sterilise.

This same method can be used if you are using a commercial vacuum bottling outfit such as Fowlers Vacola.

Some instructions suggest using a needle to make tiny pricks in the skin of the fruit before simmering it gently for ten minutes, but be very careful not to pierce the fruit itself. This helps to remove some of the strong citric flavour. Then rinse the cumquats in cold water before bottling them in jars with a light syrup.

Remember that brandied cumquats also make great gifts – simply soften fruit, place in sterilised airtight jars and steep whole in brandy. Or maybe try

making up a tasty relish to have with cold meats or cheese.

When sterilising, refer to bottle manufacturer's recommendations for temperature and cooking times. ❧

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Chook Motel On Stilts

by Martin Hirsch, Qld.

Built mostly from bush timbers and a number of offcuts from home construction, the 'Chook Motel' is a safe abode for chickens which otherwise would be vulnerable to nocturnal predators of various kinds. Catering for small numbers (up to 10), the stilted structure suits free-ranging hens and ducks which prefer the open orchard or yard during the day but are in need of a safe camp for the night, a regular feeding point and somewhere to lay their eggs once they reach maturity.

Chances are, you have the materials on hand from offcuts or older materials which were too rough for inside the home. Alternatively, you could search the tip for materials. Straight bush timber also does the job quite adequately.

The structure I built, depicted in the photo, measures 2.5 metres long and is 1.6 metres tall. The actual inside space is 2.5 x 0.5 x 0.7 metres. Size can, of course, be varied to suit your needs.

For the legs of the motel, set the stilts (75 x 75 millimetres), or equivalent in bush logs, in concrete (4 : 1 mix) 60 centimetres into the ground and continue the concreting as a skirt some 20 – 30 centimetres above ground level to prevent rot and white ant attack. Treating the part of the posts which is set into the ground with creosote or similar timber preservative is advised.

From here on, building is a breeze. Forget about spirit levels and plumb. In all the time our various chickens and ducks occupied the premises no complaints ever surfaced from them, not a single piece of abusive ornithological graffiti was scratched or pecked into the walls. Simply take a close look at the photograph, then use your imagination and creative manual skills to let the structure evolve in front of your eyes. For many who have left the city, the pop-up toasters and the water-gobbling computerised dishwashers in search of a peaceful, more or less self-sufficient lifestyle, building this chook motel is good practice to hone some basic skills such as excavating a few post holes, swinging a sledgehammer,



poking around compacted dirt with a crowbar and using a hammer to drive some straight nails into timbers.

Anyhow, back to the job! Working on rough dimensions of 2.5 metres length, 0.5 metres height and 0.7 metres depth, the framed part should be at least one metre above ground level to serve its purpose. For the basic frame, old battens (75 x 35 millimetres) are suitable, or indeed any reasonably straight bush timber. Clad the sides and back with handy materials such as roofing iron, Fibrolite panels or weatherboard.

Nail birdwire to the front (not shown in photo) and install one door at either end (approximately 0.5 x 0.6 metres).

It is now time for a break, a hearty lunch and plenty of fluid to carry you through the rest of the job, namely roof and floor. Slat of old hardwood flooring can be used for the floor. Keep a 1-centimetre space between each slat to allow for droppings to fall through. The droppings make good fertiliser when collected regularly and added to your compost. Nail the roofing iron on with a gentle slope to the rear of the structure and allow a small overhang to prevent erosion around the posts.

On the photographed structure a sheet of industrial-strength polythene

sheeting was tacked to the frame and strips of bark laid on top to lessen the impact of rain and hail. (Alas, polythene does stretch after a while, particularly in heat waves.)

Next, collect some fallen branches and cut into 20-centimetre-long sticks, nailed to a 2.5-metre-long, 25-centimetre-wide board and secure it next to one of the doors/gates of the motel. The chickens and ducks will train quite readily to the gently sloping 'gangplank' to get to their overnight accommodation.

Now pull up a stump or chair and sit back to admire your work, while sipping a cup of herbal tea. Train the chickens to come home every night for a hand-feeding session and watch them as they contentedly take their place in the pecking order. No, you are not imagining things, there is that grateful look on all their faces at the end of the day, knowing they are safe from predators. It is essential to leave no gaps in the motel as small carpet snakes will find them. In the mornings, your reward comes in the shape of fresh eggs once the chickens have reached maturity. The chicken motel can be erected for a very little outlay on hinges, nails and some wood preservative, providing the other materials are free and readily available. ♡

LANDCARE WITHOUT HERBICIDES

Weed Control Methods

by Shane Adams, Kyogle, NSW.

In GR150 I introduced readers to the concept of Landcare without using herbicides and to the policies and projects of the Zero Herbicide Landcare Group – Kyogle. This time I'll provide some details about our practical, and successful, weed control measures.

WOODY WEEDS

(trees, shrubs and lantana)

These weeds are pulled from the ground if small enough; otherwise they are cut off repeatedly, just above ground level, until they die. If woody weeds are deprived of their ability to photosynthesise, they will die. Implicit in this approach is the need to *genuinely* deprive them of their ability to photosynthesise, to cut them often enough. The group has succeeded with the use of this technique in killing camphor laurel, Chinese celtis, umbrella tree, lantana and groundsel bush. The cut stump resprouts soon after being cut, and is recut every month until it dies. This takes between six and twelve months to achieve, depending on the amount of rainfall in this time. If the woody weed is first cut in a particularly wet time, an extra follow-up cut two weeks after the first cut is useful.

VINES

Madeira Vine

Madeira vine (*Anredera cordifolia*) is cut leaving the above-ground material intact, then the root system is removed from the ground because it is capable of more rapid instant regrowth than are tubers, particularly in the wet season. Then begins the long follow-up control period, in common with herbicidal methods. Tubers are removed from the ground, and the site, continually, until they exist (sprout) no more. This involves a tedious, time-consuming and systematic initial removal of tubers, followed by an intensive follow-up for one year (monthly in the wet season and bimonthly in the dry

season/winter), and a less intensive follow-up (every two to three months) beyond this first year.

A key component in controlling the regrowth of madeira vine is to deprive the sprouting tubers of sunlight in order to slow their rate of regrowth (madeira vine is actually less shade tolerant than some vines). This is done in three ways:

- Only small areas are worked at a time, so as to not open a large sunny area for their rapid regrowth, and so as not to overextend oneself for follow-up/maintenance.

- The area is replanted after the first follow-up weeding of tubers (second weeding) with broadleaf rainforest species, to recreate a dense shading canopy.

- The initial weeding is usually done in January – February (when working under the dense weed canopy is necessary for comfort), so that the resprouting tubers do not have access to significant bright sunlight until the temperatures of the air and soil are low enough to retard their growth rate. By the time the weather conditions are optimal for growth of the vine again, and sunlight is penetrating the depleted canopy, numerous months of tuber removal have the numbers well reduced. If the initial weeding occurred between September and December, canopy drop would be much faster, allowing sunlight penetration in the late (summer – autumn) wet season, and therefore very fast regrowth during the initial follow-up period.

Other Vines

Other vines are often perceived as being less of a problem because they have no aerial tubers. However, all vines at advanced stages of maturity have a mass of reproductive material underneath them, whether seeds or tubers which sprout equally effectively once sunlight is let in. Many vines are likely to drop their leaves and let the sun in quicker than the more succulent

madeira vine foliage, as well as having a better tolerance of light shade than madeira vine. Thus, a later primary treatment (April – May) is desirable for these other vines so that cooler temperatures restrict regrowth during the initial follow-up period, even if shade won't.

ANNUAL WEEDS AND HERBACEOUS PERENNIALS

The basic principle behind herbicide-free methods for control of annual weeds and herbaceous perennials is to simply swing a brushcutter rather than a spray pack to cut a 1.5 to 2-metre swathe through the weeds rather than to spray a 1.5 to 2-metre swathe through the weeds. This takes the same amount of time; and similarly requires correct timing to prevent seed production, and careful consideration of weed removal prioritisation. The differences are that the herbicide-free method requires more frequent work in the early stages than the herbicide method to actually control the weeds, and slows the rate of the growth of desirable plants in the shorter term through increased competition; but also involves less risk of soil erosion and facilitates the collection of mulch for concentration around smaller desirable plants.

Unlike herbicidal methods, these methods involve no pretence that the weed can be killed by the primary treatment. This wrong assumption is commonly made when herbicides are applied, leading to a less successful outcome because not enough attention is paid to follow-up maintenance works. This is the most commonly identified deficiency in failed Landcare weeding projects.

Zero Herbicide Landcare Group – Kyogle desires to promote its practices and increase its membership base. Local persons interested can contact Shane Adams at 204 Blackhorse Road, Kyogle, NSW, 2474. Ph: 02-6633-3331. ☛

Livestock Health and Management

Information You Need but Haven't Known Where to Ask

If you have queries on any type of livestock send them in and we'll get our panel of experts to research the problem for you. Send them to Livestock Advice Page, Grass Roots, PO Box 117, SEYMOUR 3661.

HOME FLOCK HELP

We have run bantams on our property for four years, but recently, with the rises in grocery prices, have decided to become serious and have full-sized chooks and enjoy our own free-range eggs. We have given a home to ex-cage birds and all are adapting well to their comfortable and humane home.

There are a few queries I wonder if you could help us with?

- The most natural feed for layers
- Best greens
- Natural method for worming
- Remedy for chooks eating eggs
- Soft eggs or eggs with soft ends and uneven shell formation
- Food for fattening table birds
- Can eggs be stored with water?

When I was young I remember my grandfather mixing mash with cooked vegie scraps each morning. It had the consistency of fine porridge. Is this still available? The chooks should have enough grit as they run on coarse sandy loam in a rainforest area, but with the odd soft and soft-ended egg perhaps a substitute is needed.

If anyone can help with any of these queries it would be much appreciated.

Pamela Seddon,

C/- Box 317, BEERWAH 4519.

Your questions, Pamela, would provide the basis for a great article on keeping poultry, and in the future we may be able to tackle

this in depth. For now, space dictates only the briefest of answers. To feed birds reasonably naturally, you need to select old-fashioned purebreds that have made do on farms for decades. Hybrids, as you have got, perform best on commercial layer rations. If you don't wish to feed pellets, a mix of grains (wheat with a small proportion of several other grains like sorghum, hulled oats, barley etc), seeds (bulk bird mix is the cheapest), greens like silverbeet and fast maturing Asian greens, and stale bread may be given. Queensland legislature prohibits feeding kitchen and restaurant wastes. Hens also must have fine hard grit, shell or limestone chips, and clean water. The best green feed for poultry is lucerne; check if there is a variety suited to your area. Worming can be successfully carried out with crushed garlic added to drinking water (1 clove for every 2 - 3 hens) for three days every month. Yards should be cleaned out after this and lightly dug over. Hens start eating eggs when a weak-shelled egg breaks; they investigate, like the contents and shell, and a bad habit develops. Shell grit or limestone chips should be available to the flock all the time. Keep nests dark and ensure nest litter is thick. Collect eggs during the day if possible to remove temptation. If these measures are unsuccessful, blow an egg and fill with chilli sauce or some other spicy concoction. These measures together have a high success rate.

Eggs with soft ends or irregular shell formation are often laid by high producing hens that are not receiving adequate calcium (shell grit), or they may be the result of laying overly large eggs, or poor carbonate metabolism due to high temperatures. One problem with ex-battery hens is that they lay large eggs in their second and third years, and the same amount of calcium that enclosed their pullets eggs is now having to stretch around a super-sized egg, hence the problems you have seen occur. Putting flesh on birds is the result of feeding plus containment in a pen or yard so the weight isn't walked off. You can feed mushy mixes of pollard and bran or even cooked vegetables, but the best and firmest flesh is obtained from a grain mix (with maize added for the yellow flesh colour). Green feed should also be offered, hung along the fence so it provides a diversion for the inactive birds. Due to space we'll hold egg storage over till next issue. Finally, the grit the birds are picking up is hard grit and necessary for gizzard function, but is not a good source of calcium. You must use shell grit or limestone chips for this. Good luck and happy chooking.

Managing Poultry for Home and Hobby by Bruce Pattinson.

An ideal book for beginners.

\$33.50 incl p & h

Poultry Information Publishers,
PO Box 438, SEYMOUR 3661.



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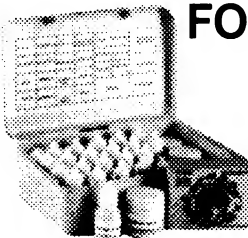
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ECO NEWS

VOLCANO SPAWNING?

An earthquake that originated 50 kilometres from King Island (between Tasmania and Victoria) in February this year could indicate the reawakening of one of the world's 100 plus volcano hot spots. A hot spot is an area of the earth's crust where hot gases are expelled. This particular one is several hundred kilometres wide and spreads from under Bass Strait to parts of southern Victoria and northern Tasmania. A volcanologist has speculated that the hot spot could spawn a volcano within a hundred years.

WASTE WATER MANAGEMENT

Shoalhaven (NSW) is the site of an exciting development in waste water management with the recent launch of the first stage of the Shoalhaven REclaimed water Management System (REMS). This project will utilise the waste water from six nearby treatment plants to irrigate dairy farms and sporting venues. The good news for the environment is that about 2000 million litres of water per year, 80 percent of the waste water from the region serviced by stage one, will be reclaimed and used rather than being disposed of into Jervis Bay. Releases into the Shoalhaven River will remain unchanged until the next stage of the project is completed in two or three years time.

FROG FINDINGS

Extensive research into declining numbers and species extinctions of frogs has revealed the major cause to be a chytrid fungus, *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis*. The fungus has been found on 44 Australian frog species, seven of which are threatened species, and is believed to have been instrumental in the extinctions of six Australian species.

In spite of this, a survey in the rice-growing areas of the Riverina has found that frogs in the region are thriving. Researchers estimate a population of 44 billion frogs taking advantage of the aquatic environment of the rice fields. The most populous species is the spotted grass frog and the barking frog is also well represented.

The Amphibian Research Centre in

Melbourne, meanwhile, is playing a pivotal role in breeding and reintroducing to alpine areas of NSW a population of spotted tree frogs. Once common in alpine streams, loss of habitat, chytrid fungus, and trout predation of tadpoles has brought the NSW population to the brink of extinction. The rescue project involved breeding a male frog from Kosciuszko National Park with females of the same species from Victoria, after a 10-day search found only one male of the NSW population. The resultant 600 tadpoles will be released into Bogong Creek.



MARINE PARKS BACK ON THE AGENDA

Last year, after much politicisation of the issue, a proposal for a marine parks system for five percent of Victoria's coastline was abandoned. A revised form of the legislation is now about to be reintroduced to parliament. The proposal is for 13 marine national parks and 11 marine sanctuaries to be created. One of the issues that saw the failure of last year's attempted legislation was that of compensation for fishers. This time around there will be an assessment panel to examine claims for compensation.

Experience from around the world has demonstrated the benefits of marine reserves. A three-year study at the University of California by an international group of marine scientists declared that 'marine reserves conserve both biodiversity and fisheries, and could help replenish the seas'.

Studies at the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary discovered that fish density was 91 percent higher inside the no-take zone than outside, fish were 31 percent larger, species diversity was 23 percent greater, and catches near the no-take zone were increasing. With fisheries in crisis worldwide (see Eco News items in GRs 123 and 130), marine reserves offer a chance to turn the tide.

PLAINS WANDERER RESCUE PLAN

The Trust For Nature has recently purchased a 246-hectare property near Kerang (Victoria) to protect rare and threatened grassland flora and fauna, including the plains wanderer, a grassland-dependent bird whose numbers have declined significantly in recent years. The major threats to this docile, ground-dwelling bird are predators, pesticides and habitat loss and fragmentation. The reserve, Korrack Korrack, will be managed in conjunction with 50 local landowners who have formed a voluntary network to manage the grassland remnants on their properties for conservation values. Grazing, for example, can co-exist with the rare fauna and flora of the area, but ploughing will quickly eliminate the native plants, and hence the animals that depend on them. Less than one percent of Victoria's original grassland is still intact.

BUSH HERITAGE UPDATE

The latest acquisition of the Australian Bush Heritage Fund is an 876-hectare property at Chereninup Creek in south-west Western Australia. This is one of the world's foremost biodiversity hot spots, so labelled because of the species richness and endemism of the area. Twelve sensitive ecosystems will be protected in the reserve and it will form part of a continuous habitat link from south-west Western Australia to the Gulf and Cape York, the Top End in the Northern Territory and the Kimberley in north-west Western Australia.

To find out more about Chereninup Creek, or Bush Heritage's other managed properties, or to make a donation ph:03-6223-2670. ☛

FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

Dear GR,

I would like to **THANK ALL** those wonderful people out there who took the time to write to me and offer advice on keeping sane with my two children and the ongoing battle with couch grass and kikuyu. Thank you once again for reassuring me that I am 'normal' and for all your advice.

Katrina,
8 John St, PENOLA 5277.

Dear Extended GR family,

Well, after seven years of reading about it, dreaming about it, buying it and then trying to get to it – we're finally here on our 217 acres near Tabulam in northern NSW. But what a shock to our apparently not-so-self-sufficient country living selves. In fact, for me anyway, the 48° C heat of the last few weeks (although I am told this is very unusual weather) has truly fried away all but the last of my awesome enthusiasm as I watch my beloved baby veggie garden wilt and my energy levels slump daily as the mercury rises. The kids seem more resilient, but please, I, we, **NEED SOME ADVICE** (and at this point encouragement!) on several fronts.

Firstly, **THE VEGIE PATCH**. I need to find (preferably) bush foods which thrive in this extreme weather. I'm guessing winter is cold, but neighbours tell me that our mountain plateau receives no frost. I'll happily pay for seeds/tubers etc, and will graciously receive any info on harvest, cooking etc.

Secondly, our **GAS FRIDGE** suffers a personality disorder in the heat and believes it's an oven. Any suggestions? Commercial milk in this incubator turns into a block of soft cheese-like stuff topped with yellowish whey. Is there a culinary use for this? Is it safe to cook/eat? The chickens love it, but they eat well enough, and, if I can use it, I will. Also, some thickened cream 'blew-up' in the fridge while we were away and upon our return had thinned into something akin to mozzarella! I sense something promising here too, but what?

Thirdly, I currently have **NO OVEN** and would appreciate some recipe ideas that emulate baked foods without the baking, especially biscuits, vegetable and nut or legume loaves and breads. Or perhaps plans/ideas for a simple yet safe (two boys under six to consider) outdoor oven.

Next on the list is the **DAMS**. Not one of the four hold water. This is rocky country. Liners are too costly so hubby is going to try building-grade black plastic, rubber membrane and a top coat of mud. Has anyone tried this or anything else with success?

Finally, I'd appreciate hearing about a complete alternative to commercial shampoo and conditioner; plans for a bicycle-run flour mill; and a ginger beer recipe. Sorry to ask so much but thank you everyone – just putting my needs in writing has lightened my heart.

Here's a tip for those who don't/can't use eggs or who find themselves **SHORT OF EGGS** for baking. Boil one tablespoon of **SAGO** in one cup of water (approx). Watch for the sago to turn clear and jelly like. Transfer to a glass jar and allow to cool. Store in the fridge. Use one tablespoon of sago to replace each egg in the recipe. It's an excellent binder.

Karen Bloomfield,
'Flitchwood', Paddys Flat Rd, TABULAM 2469.

Dear GR Readers,

We are a family of six currently living in the beautiful north-west of Tassie. We're planning to **MOVE TO SOUTH AUSTRALIA** in June 2002. Time for a change! Hoping that readers might be able to help with information on areas between Mount Gambier and McLaren Vale. Ideally we'd like to find a town close to the ocean with high employment and a friendly atmosphere. Anyone wanting to know about Tasmania, feel free to write.

W Murphy,
C/- PO IRISHTOWN 7330.

Dear Grass Roots Family,

Imagine my surprise when the phone rang after my note to Megg appeared in the GR147 for people to stop awhile at our place. I didn't even realise it would go in, let alone so fast. We met some lovely people, although the right soul hasn't arrived yet. Maybe when the time is right we will find someone who is self-sufficient and is looking for a quiet place to help out and do some good for the land.

Lea Bonkett (GR148) – **RE TICKS**: We have the same problem and have found 'Frontline' very effective for the dogs, but it must be used fortnightly during the tick season. It is a nasty chemical, but we haven't had any problems with it and it works. I have been told that guinea fowl are great for ticks and are careless mothers so if they are allowed to free range – you won't be overrun with them. For your **POSSUM PROBLEMS**, cut all branches that overhang your roof; seal any loose sections of roof; and put up possum boxes in nearby trees. This might help keep them out of the roof.

We inherited an extensive seed library from the hardworking people who owned our place before us. There is a huge array of all sorts of veggie seeds, all labelled and dated. I have tried some seeds with some success, but, as our priorities lie in other directions, would anyone close to the Gympie region be interested in all or some of the seeds?

Any females out in GR-land who object to paying such horrendous prices for sanitary items, try 'The Keeper', as advertised in previous GR mags. It is a few dollars outlay, but will last for many, many years and covers its cost in six months.

Di Woodstock,
NORTH DEEP CREEK 4570.



Dear GR,

I hope to soon purchase a small holding of 10 to 20 acres in the **GRAFTON/COFFS HARBOUR AREA** for wife and myself, plus son, daughter-in-law and their three children. Can any readers inform me of any of the pitfalls that I might run into? I'd like to have my eyes opened a bit as I have a tendency to take people at their word. Also, I would like to contact like-minded people (friends) in this area.

Stan Gordon,
147 Smith St, SOUTHPORT 4215.

Dear GR Readers,

There is no 'cure' for the two **HORSES' EYE PROBLEMS** about which I have asked for help in a previous issue of GR. However, the eye washes have gone a long way to easing the eyes of discharges and, done twice a day, tide them over from one wash to the next, along with medication in their food morning and night. Thank you to everyone for the wonderful, kind and very generous response. I am sure I did not miss anyone, writing back immediately to thank you personally.

Another query. I recently bought a new apron, but it must be a modern design, because it is not very wide across the top – the neckband (strap) cuts into my neck and in general the apron doesn't protect me, so I have managed to get spots and fleck stains over my blouses. Now I do not use it at all. Does anyone have a pattern? Perhaps the older aprons were better? Even if it had sleeves! I'm averaging between a size 10 and 12, but I think aprons come in one-size-fits-all. I will, of course, reimburse postal costs. Any help most gratefully accepted and appreciated. Anyone coming through the Armidale area and wanting a cuppa? Write to make sure I'm home at that time.

Mari,
PO Box 1002, ARMIDALE 2350.

Anonymous letters will not be published. Please indicate if you would like personal details to be withheld. ☛

FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

The Editor, GR Magazine,

Tonight seems the right time to write. I have lived a GR life for possibly 46 years, and thought many a time of writing. Duties and time have always deterred me and sent me on another track. Tonight, though, I had finished a day of playing mum/grandma/owner builder/garden lover/designer at 10.30pm, I wandered in for tea and started reading GR magazine. An article, 'Avoiding Transplant Shock', finally created this urge to write. I believe that, yes, the hint about **BURYING ROAD-KILL** is a final solution to dispose of these unfortunate animals who happen to be grazing in their rightful place at their rightful time, except that in the modern world trucks and cars can thunder along roadways. I live on a tourist road, Grandridge Road; it is also a main access road for the logging industry. Not only do these trucks hurl along scrambling drivers, women pushing prams and people taking a casual stroll, they continue to wipe out whatever wildlife has survived civilisation. These road-kills are justified by the need to beat time and extract trees while the chance is there. Not only are our wildlife, residents and peace at stake, we have no choice but to accept it! After spending my tea hour on the phone tracking down a wildlife rescue service for Cowes (I live in Mirboo some 120 kilometres away), it hit a nerve about composting road-kills. Next time it won't be a koala, wallaby or wombat, but a grandchild, daughter or sister. Do I compost them? I have no idea where or how to stop this slaughter.

Leonie Parker,

RMB 1142, Grandridge Rd, MIRBOO EAST 3870.

Dear Everyone,

I am trying to get hold of some magnetic fly screens. Has anyone else seen these? If so, do you know where I can get them from? Most of the hardware stores I've asked have looked at me like I'm an alien. Does anyone else know what I mean? They literally have a magnetic edge which fits around the outside of the window or door and you sort of peel it off when you want to go through the doorway. As I have aluminium-framed doors, these would be ideal for doors where we only go through them occasionally.

Beverly Duncan,

C/- PO WOOMBYE 4559.

Hi To You All,

Thank you for a great magazine, really enjoyable. Interested in your articles country versus city. Well, we are from the suburbs, with all its car fumes, pollution and noise, against isolation, lack of amenities etc. We in our suburban block are really self-supporting in vegies and herbs. We have to buy some organic potatoes, otherwise our backyard supports the two of us. We use organic flour, wheat and rye grain, and make some of our own flour for bread. Our bread takes about 30 hours to make and most of this is in the rising stage. Our work takes only about one hour. The bread consists of organic wheat, warm filtered water and a couple of grains of salt, no sourdough or yeast. The yeast is naturally in the organic product. We also make our own vegan pastry for pies, sunflower yoghurt and sunflower and nut cheese, all vegan. Have no car, no TV or video, no computer. Have books of all types, and music from 1900s upwards to the '70s. Ride a push bike to do the shopping. We are still protesting against ??? Started protesting for Ban the Bomb in 1957. Hippie ideology, no drugs or drink, not even coffee. Spiritual, but not religious.

We feel we are truly grassroots. It is not a matter of where you are, but it is a matter of what you are and how you look at the illusion. If anyone wants the recipe for bread, yoghurt etc or just to write for a rave, please feel free to contact us.

Wendy & Stuart Burfield,

PO Box 97, GRANVILLE 2142.

Your beautiful hand-drawn letterhead was much admired in the office.

Dear Readers,

We have been regular readers of *Grass Roots* since purchasing our five-acre block, south of Perth. There are many articles of interest and we especially liked the Feb/March issue cover. Refreshing to see natural beauty – yes Suni and Light Sussex hen!

Of interest to some readers may be the **INTERNATIONAL MACCORMICK** 434 diesel 1967 tractor that came with the property. It's in good working order and my husband enjoys looking after it and keeping it in good condition. Unfortunately, we have not been able to find notes on this tractor, despite queries to the library and Internet. A working manual would be wonderful. We would enjoy hearing from someone. Here's hoping!

Sue Blackham,

171 Clifton Downs Rd, MANDURAH 6210.

Email: reflections@westnet.com.au

Dear GR Readers,

I am writing this letter from Yokohama, Japan. Since May 2001 I have been working as an English teacher for a large Japanese corporation called Nova. Well, after almost one year I have decided to call it quits and come home to Australia. Life for me in a **LARGE JAPANESE METROPOLIS** has been quite stressful and rather expensive. I enjoy meeting with my students, but feel I don't have what it takes to make a fist of teaching. My dream is to come home and go about starting a new life on the east coast of Australia. The far south coast of NSW is where I want to settle. I have magical memories of this part of Australia because it was here that I would go for family holidays during the '70s.

As a single guy (37), I would appreciate any letters from anybody who can offer any wisdom on making a fresh start. I am struggling to get a deposit together for a small house, and dream of working for myself one day. Getting work in country locations can be difficult, I know. I am interested in healthy living, swimming (as meditation and fitness), poetry, reading, cooking, camping, walking and spirituality. I regard myself as sensitive and do not wish to live in large cities any longer. My experience of living and working in Japan has been a combination of wonder at a foreign culture, and just loneliness and frustration with a stressful job and not really fitting into a work culture that involves drinking after hours and mixing with uni graduates. They make me feel old!!

Please feel free to write and I promise to return letters to all replies.

Martin James,

C/- Unit 76, Great Sandy Straits Resort,
Buccaneer Drv, HERVEY BAY 4655.

Dear GR Readers,

I have asked Lilian (GR149, page 42) for her 'robertum seeds'. After I have grown this plant I can then identify what it really is, but I think our editor is right; it should be called **GERANIUM ROBERTIANUM**. I looked in so many books and could not find any herb by that name. I found in my German herb book Culpeper recommended this herb for stopping any bleeding. The German and English name came about through the Benedictine monk Robert von Molesme, a reformer of the first monastery in 1098. In his memory this herb was called 'Herb Robert'. Later it was called *Geranium robertianum*.

It has been used for ulcers/boils on the skin and for stomach ulcers. It calms down stomach upsets and heals wounds and cuts faster, without any infections. I could not find any words about cancerous tumours. The American *Geranium maculatum* (cranes-bill) and *Geranium dissectum* have similar properties. The leaves have a high percentage of tannin which binds important minerals and prevents absorption in the digestive tract.

Rosemary Krockner,

Naturopathic & Herbalist Researcher,
45 High St, URUNGA 2455.

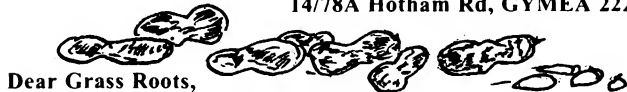
FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

Dear GR & Readers,

Like so many, I'm planning to move to the bush and would love to hear from readers interested in **SHARING A GR LIFESTYLE** in coastal or mid NSW. My goals are bush regeneration and self-sufficiency. I'd appreciate assistance from a single, amenable person who is handy with tools, in return for accommodation. Thanks to all people who wrote last year re allergies and I hope you are all feeling so much better.

H Bell,

14/78A Hotham Rd, GYMEA 2227.



Dear Grass Roots,

I am searching for the method of how to prepare what I call **WET NUTS**. I lived in Cairns a few years ago and used to purchase them from the supermarket. They are simply peanuts boiled, stewed or otherwise, in some kind of salt solution. They are quite messy to eat as they are wet, but taste magnificent. I have thought of simply boiling them in salt water for a time but peanuts are not inexpensive, so if anyone knows the correct method please let me know.

I also grow gourds and loofahs and each year struggle with sooty mould/powdery mildew. I know this is caused by humidity and overhead watering, but any ideas on how to prevent it? It consumes the entire plant.

I am also trying to raise mango trees from seed, but have been told that in time they will not produce perfect fruit unless grafted. If this is so, what would you suggest I graft them onto?

Carmen Morrow,

29 Stroud St, ALLWORTH 2425.

Email: dcmoylan@idx.com.au

Dear Megg & Mary,

Today, I listened to the radio with great interest and trepidation, the subject was **SALINITY IN WA** and the consequences it brings. We have massive farms here almost devoid of trees, hence the salinity. Could part of the answer be for the farmer and government to get together and allow people on really low incomes (if inclined) to live on parts of the land in low cost dwellings (caravans or dongas), providing a proper septic system was in use. A lot of people would use rainwater and all different ways of producing power. The criteria being that they plant hundreds of trees on their allotted piece of land and, depending on the agreement reached in obtaining the land, they could also be low cost assistance to the farmer – more tree planting etc. If the land is not good for wheat growing, it should not worry GRs much as they use a lot of no-dig gardening. Yes, I know the idea is too simplistic and won't happen, but for myself, being on a low income and loving the thought of my own bit of dirt, bought or borrowed, it seems a wonderful idea, one helping the other.

Derek,

PO Box 621, MANJIMUP 6258.

Dear Readers,

So many queries get answers. I wonder if anyone knows where I could obtain the following book: **UNICORNS – On The History And The Truth Of The Unicorn: The Facsimile and Translation of an Original Manuscript** by Michael Green. That is its full title. The book is written as though it is a medieval manuscript. It was published in about 1943 by Running Press Book Publishers of Philadelphia. I have written to the publishers who tell me the book is out of print. Second-hand book sellers have looked for it on the net. I would be grateful if any reader could let me know if a copy is available. Depending on condition, I would pay what is a normal second-hand price.

Anne Foorde,

PO Box 602, BUDERIM 4556.

Hello Grass Roots People,

I only became interested in sustainable lifestyles a couple of years ago. After we got a computer at home, I had access to so much information, I think that is the main reason why I became a vegetarian and really began getting into all the environmental stuff. I used to get really depressed 'cos no one I knew felt the same way, I sort of saw myself as a bit of a freak or a weirdo. You can't even begin to imagine how I felt when I found GR. I discovered I'm not the only weirdo in this world after all! I still get frustrated with people at times though. I used to work for a toy importer and everyone was asked to put a Christmas message in the Chrissy bulletin, so I said all that 'be safe and happy' stuff, as well as reminding people to be careful what they tip down the sink, and try to recycle, and all that sort of thing. My boss later said I should be careful what I say 'cos it's like preaching a religion. Is it? I don't see how it can be 'cos we all live on this one and only little blue planet and it's up to all of us to take care of it. Some people just don't see the big picture do they?

I'd like to meet more **LIKE-MINDED PEOPLE**, is there anyone out there looking for a new friendship? I'd love to hear from you. I'm 27 and have been living in my house in the Dandenong Ranges with my boyfriend and three dogs now for nearly four years. After I get over my travel bug my dream is, of course, to get my own piece of land and become as self-sufficient as I can. I am collecting all the GRs for future reference, as well as any other info I come across that I think will help us. Through my job I have discovered a technical manual through The Australian Greenhouse Office. It gives heaps of info about how to build in an environmentally friendly way. It's really inspiring and I would suggest people try to get a hold of it. I think it's around the \$55 mark. You could also get onto their Internet site at: www.greenhouse.gov.au Some of the stuff is really interesting. I would actually like to know if anyone can give me any concoctions to deter termites from my home. I don't want to use toxic chemical sprays and was after a friendlier alternative.

Also, I have collected a heap of kangaroo paw flowers and wondered how I go about growing more. If you would like to reply to me you could email me at: kelzyhoff@hotmail.com or just the old snail mail to the address below. Take care everyone.

Kelly,

7 Murrumbung Rd, MOUNT EVELYN 3796.

Kelly, there is a mesh product for termite protection of homes. Any good builder/supplier should know about it. It's called Termimesh.

Dear GR,

Peter has purchased an old wagon that had been sitting out in the open for the last 45 years. When he winched it onto the trailer the main shaft broke and the wagon began to collapse. By the time Peter towed it home the wagon had just about fallen to bits.

An oval metal plate on the side is stamped **HARVESTER SUNSHINE WORKS** with a serial number on the reverse. Also Peter found that one of the wheel main shafts is stamped 'Gilpin Wedgemills 1905'.

I have been told that the company, Sunshine Harvesters, is a Victorian company which went out of business some years ago and a multiplex cinema has been built on the site. Any readers who have any information or can point us in the right direction to obtain information, we would love to hear from them. I have started looking on the Internet but have not been successful so far.

Alison & Peter Stacey,

110 Hansens Rd, TUMBI UMBI 2261.

Please keep letters brief, clearly written and relevant to self-sufficiency topics. Letters pushing barrows (religious, political or other) will not be published. ☹

FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

Dear Megg & Readers,

A big g'day from a longtime reader (14 years), coming out of the woodwork with my first letter to you all.

Over the past few weeks I have been reading back over all my old copies of *Grass Roots*, the earliest I have is number 19. I was lucky enough to be given a bundle of early ones by my husband's lovely Godmother (Hi Coop)! What a nostalgic trip. Feels like something's missing these days, though.

We are a mum and dad in our early 30s with a 4-year-old daughter, Promise, and nearly one-year-old son, Ethan. We have been vegetarians for about six years; can't stand and don't have a TV; would only use doctors in the event of accident or emergency, preferring to use a good naturopath and homoeopath instead. Our kids will be home schooled and our evenings are spent playing music – fiddle, guitar, harp; reading; shortwave listening and other good, honest pastimes. Are there other **LIKE-MINDED PEOPLE** around us? Generally we feel like we are on our 'Pat Malone' around these parts and living in these false, plastic, TV-brain-washing times. Drop us a line if you are out there. We live half an hour from Toowoomba. I would especially like to hear from the Stanthorpe and Tenterfield areas as well.

Another thing, I am a fussy, tasty cook, developing my own vego recipes on the healthy side. I had a hard time when we first started out, so would like to help others just starting out with a few of my recipes that are tried, true and tasty, plus helpful footnotes about them. I hate wasting good food on the compost, and time on bad recipes that don't work. (Maybe it's a matter of taste.) I tried a loaf recipe recently in a back issue and it did not happen for me! It was a savoury veggie loaf one, incidentally. Can anyone help? One that sets hard, slices and is good cold on sandwiches. I can send recipes for my own and adapted red lentil pie, Hungarian dumpling soup, nut meat patties, gluten steaks, spring rolls, chow mein, spicy zata potatoes, veggie sausage rolls, tomato & lima bean hot pot and a healthy salad dressing at the moment – I have more though. These have been a hit with nonvego friends and family alike. Just send an SAE if wanting a copy of any or all. Other writers in my area, don't worry about it. Bible readers are welcome to write too.

Michelle,

PO Box 95, GOOMBUNGEE 4354.

Dear Grass Roots Folks,

After many many years of joyfully reading your great magazine, it's about time I wrote in to say thank you very much for bringing me down to earth, getting my hands dirty and back to basics. My husband John and I live in an inner-city suburb on 24 perches and enjoy keeping chooks and permaculture gardening. It's a peaceful oasis in the midst of the hustle and bustle of the rat race outside. So please keep the good work up with *Grass Roots* as your efforts are really appreciated, even by us city dwellers.

Maureen Adams,

19 School St, KELVIN GROVE 4069.

Dear GR,

Shane Hansen asked for a recipe for **SAUERKRAUT**. This is a recipe from *The Baedeken Voor de Luisvroun* printed in Holland in the '50s.

Four white and 2 Chinese cabbages sliced very fine, 4 – 5 millimetres thick, 10 grams salt and 2 black peppercorns or juniper berries for each kilogram of cabbage. Mix the cabbage and the required amount of salt till the cabbage is soft and a liquid salty substance is found. Mix the peppercorns or juniper berries in and press mixture in a glazed earthenware jar. Cover with clean cloth (white), put a plank on top and then a brick for weight. Cover the lot with a cloth to protect from dust and store at 190° C. Regularly remove the mould which forms and, when tasting fresh and sauerly, place in cellar. Keeps for up to a year.

T G Jonkind,

202 Buff Point Ave, BUFF POINT 2262.

Dear GR Readers,

I have recently moved to the Rockhampton area and am planning to build a mostly **SOLAR POWERED HOUSE** on my seven-acre block. Does anyone know of a builder in this area who is experienced in building passive solar homes?

I am also seeking information from anyone who has experience in building their own solar home and in the use of products such as gas/electric refrigeration, 'on demand' gas hot water systems or small solar hot water systems, composting toilets – in particular those installed at ground level (such as the Enviro Loo) advertised in this magazine. It would be a great advantage to know of any pitfalls or shortcomings in advance.

My brother has been trying to convince me to build a strawbale house, but I'm a bit dubious. Again, I would like to hear from anyone with experience in this type of construction.

I would also like to hear from anyone in the Rockhampton area with an interest in bush regeneration as I have cleared my block of lantana and rubber vine and would like to do more work in this field. All replies gratefully received.

Michael Leahy,

106 Princess St, ROCKHAMPTON NORTH 4701.

Dear Grass Roots,

There is a cream that will permanently get rid of malignant and nonmalignant **SKIN CANCERS**. It is herbal and 100 percent guaranteed. I have used it on four cancers and my friends and relatives have also used it a lot more than me – all with complete success. It is expensive but you need only one application, so it lasts forever. It is called 'Cansema' and is distributed in Australia by J Wilson, Locked Bag 67, Drake NSW 2469.

Carolyn Ramage,

'Parafield', Cloughs Rd, YARRAGUNDRY 2650.

Dear GRs,

Just have to put pen to paper after reading the article from Denise Jones (GR149). What an achiever. And what an inspiration! To face 'simple' parenting of teenagers is daunting enough, before even considering some form of housing. Most of us would opt for the 'easy' way out and rent forever. I'm sure at times, Denise, you must have had your down days, when exhaustion and the sheer enormity of what you attempted nearly overwhelmed you. But you got there. You have shown true GR spirit of get-up-and-go. Congratulations. We look forward to hearing more from you and photos of your completed home.

Janet M Cos,

12 Clifford Cres, BANORA POINT 2486.



Hi Everyone,

I've just been having a pleasant time reading the old *Grass Roots* magazines I have here. Any chance of a re-issue of GRs one to five that you produced in 1979? I haven't got them, but wish I had, and I think others would welcome them too, especially as a combined book. Anyway, I'd like to thank Deb Hallam for her **IRISH TEA BRACK** (cake). Talk about easy! It would be the quickest and nicest fruit cake (husband-tested) I have made. For those who haven't seen it:

500 grams of mixed dried fruit (and peel, if liked), put in a mixing bowl with 1 cup of firm brown sugar, 1 cup of cold black tea. Let stand for one to two hours. Set your oven to 160° C and grease a loaf tin. Next mix one egg into the above mixture with a fork. Mix in two cups of sifted self raising flour and bake in a tin for 1½ hours till tested with a skewer (it should come out clean). Turn onto a wire rack to cool. Serve sliced, plain or buttered, or freeze for later.

Marj Connors,

PO Box 945, TENNANT CREEK 0861.

FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

Dear GR People,

Thanks for such a wonderful magazine. I have been living in the US for three years, and am now back and catching up with back copies from the local library. I have been a reader since about GR 8 or 9. My daughter and her partner moved onto a property where they could really live the *Grass Roots* lifestyle, so I gave my pile of GRs to her. It was about two feet high by that time. Then just a few weeks ago, in one of the copies from the library, I saw a letter from my daughter's daughter, who had 'just discovered the mag'! Three generations so far, and no end in sight I hope. The trouble with reading copies from the library is that I read something and think 'Yes!' and then find that the mag is four years old. Michelle from Bendoc wanted someone to take over her shop. Uh oh! September 1998. Probably well gone by now. Simon and Marisa Robbers were planning their outback adventure in 2000. I wonder if they made it? And Roberino? What a treasure!

Has anyone used the herb **STEVIA** as a sweetening agent, as suggested in GR129? And does it grow from seed? Any readers who can share their experiences of growing, climate, use etc would be appreciated.

I have just saved myself a number of dollars by buying a small coil of wire for about \$5. I was looking for S-hooks to support my hanging baskets but they were at least a dollar each and I needed twelve. Selected thickest wire, that I could just bend with fingers, and made all the hooks, using pliers to shape the hook part. I have just cut a longer piece to keep the door of the fridge open while I defrost. Also used longer pieces, with hooks on each end, to reach high nails on the outside eaves to hang baskets from. And I still have most of the coil left.

I am living in South Australia and looking for a house with room for a garden and fruit trees. As finances are restricted, I have been looking in **WESTERN COUNTRY VICTORIA**, or **TASMANIA**. Anyone from either of those areas who has any advice as to where to look, or where to avoid, please write and tell me. I know that Bill Mollison, the permaculture guru, lives in northern Tassie. I am an age pensioner and live alone, so I don't think I can cope with a big area now. If any older people want a penfriend I would really appreciate it and answer all letters. *Grass Roots* readers are my kind of people.

Jean Manning,

11A Sullivan St, SOMERTON PARK 5044.

Email: cadaghi31@yahoo.com

Dear Megg,

Regarding Robert Bishop's letter '**MITES IN BRAN**'. I have coeliac disease and eat various unprocessed flours and cereals. When buying flour, cereal, pasta etc, I put them in the freezer as soon as I get home, for a minimum of 24 hours. They can be stored in the freezer until use if you have room. This kills all weevils, bugs and their eggs and does not affect the product. Corn flakes are still crisp, even paper-bagged flour is not affected (just very cold – brilliant for rubbing in butter in hot weather for scones and pastry). Don't get the packaging wet though. I don't use bran and don't know the mite you speak of, but, if it likes a warm room, the freezer will probably kill it.

Debra Pearson,

41 Cinerea Ave, FERN TREE GULLY 3156.



Dear Grass Roots & Readers,

I am writing to ask if any readers might have some good **HOMEMADE WINE RECIPES**. I have an old book, but it is mainly UK recipes. I have missed your issues which had wine making in them. Am willing to pay if need be.

Norma Blanche,

11 Blueberry Rd, MOREE 2400.

Greetings To All Readers,

I just love this magazine, keep up the good work. I am hoping that the many readers out there will be able to help us in our time of need. My teenage daughter was just recently diagnosed with **CROHN'S DISEASE**. Books from the library only help so much and the doctors only want to give her chemicals. We are trying a dairy- and beef-free diet as well as low fibre and gluten free. Any recipes and or info on this condition would be great. Would also like to hear from other people in the same situation. Will reply to all. Many thanks.

Marlene Ritchie,

334 Lieutenant Bowen Drv, BOWEN MOUNTAIN 2753.

Email: Booker3@tpg.com.au

Life on Planet Earth,

How often do you stop, take a few precious moments out of your busy life and reflect upon our **EXISTENCE** here, on this huge ball of floating rock somewhere in outer space. How peaceful it can sometimes be on a clear fresh morn with delicate dew drops adding the finishing touch to the picture of perfection while at the same time travelling at incredible speed sometimes upside down on earth to the black hollow of you-tell-me.

You may try to inform me I've had a head injury or been out the back with some illegal substance, but truly life on planet earth is simply wonderment upon wonderment. Oh the lucky people who allow themselves to be filled with awe every precious moment of their earthly life, who treat their bodies with life-giving foods and allow the spirit of life to sensitise our inner being so that they are able to absorb to the fullest extent possible the beauty surrounding them and not to let it slip by unnoticed. Especially the successful ones 'not necessarily measured in material possessions' who have discovered their little piece of paradise amongst the busy happenings surrounding, to experience the joy of simplicity and the sacrifice of hard work which sometimes accompanies our chosen lifestyle. Wealthy can we be and yet have hardly a penny to our name. I'm sure many of us can relate to that. To be experiencing one of the wonderments of nature by simply planting seeds and watching them grow into many weird and wonderful forms which no form of learning can fully comprehend, and for us to be a part of this. And oh, how our lust for life may help to invigorate others and they too may melt away their days in earthly bliss, which is a gift to us all if we wish to accept it. If we don't like it we can always give it back, but don't worry, there is enough to go around for all. And is it not that the challenges and hardships we experience are simply learning experiences, although at the time they may not appear that way? The water pump won't go or the bugs just ate the garden, I'm sure life will go on and next year always adds a little more to our growing volume of experience. If there was a wish to be had in a growing world of complexities, may there be a little room for those of us who wish to experience a simple lifestyle, being gentle on the planet and having enough time to slow down, to absorb fine human qualities and earthly joys free for us all. Let's make it happen.

Paul Wright,

Lot 2, Middle Creek Rd, SARINA 4737.

Dear Grass Roots,

I am writing to ask if you know where I can get some **BULLOCK HEART TOMATO SEEDS** from.

Helen Fitzpatrick,

C/- Post Office, KANDANGA 4570.

The efficacy and/or safety of advice on these pages cannot be guaranteed. Readers are urged to take all common-sense precautions before undertaking any procedures that could possibly cause a safety risk to themselves or others. When in doubt, consult an expert. ☘

FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

Dear GRs,

Some replies to Feedback queries.

Bev wanted **ORGANIC STRAWBERRY RUNNERS**. There are strawberry plants and runners; some people grow them organically and others don't. It won't matter where the plants or runners come from, it is the way you grow them that makes them organic.

Marj Connors writes about **POTASSIUM DEFICIENCY**, but these symptoms could apply to many other health conditions. It is usually diagnosed after a blood test, and there are potassium tablets, but an easily available source is bananas.

ORGANIC/PERMACULTURE GARDENS IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS: Jennifer, I subscribe to 'Pacific Edge Permaculture', a free on-line subscription service, and receive info from and about permaculture, ecological matters etc, not just from this organisation but others linked to it.

Wendy Peddell need not worry about the ethics of spelling out **WEBSITE ADDRESSES**. This is the public domain; websites are there to be browsed, and their creators welcome visitors. To find re-earthing the cities a searcher might turn up pages of irrelevant names, and give up in exasperation. If you find a good website, share it. There are closed websites, of course; users need a password to get in, but that is not the public domain.

Using **OLD TYRES** for gardens and retaining walls is often advocated. A word of caution: they are an ideal breeding ground and hiding place for both redback and funnel-web spiders.

Robert Bishop of Caboolture is worried about **MITES IN HIS MEALWORMS**. Get a book on worm farms and follow the same principles. It is warm humid conditions and the presence of lots of food that attracts the mites in the first place. I have dispensed with my worm farm, but I used to sprinkle dolomite in it to keep it on the alkaline side of neutral and to keep out pests. I still use it in my compost bin, which also had mites at the same time I noticed them in my worm farm.

Bar O'Reilly asked about **DIATOMACEOUS EARTH**. The DE used in swimming pool filters and cat litter generally comes from the USA and has been through a heating process. Some years ago I obtained a bag of natural DE from a source in Queensland where it is mined, however, the cost of freight was prohibitive; the bag of DE cost \$12 and the rail freight was \$38! Most of it ended up with a friend who has sheep and goats; he fed it to them as a deworming medication.

Nikki C asked about **COMMUNITY GARDENS**. There is a website which I sometimes find hard to access, but persist, you might have to put in the first bit, then click on subjects: www.magna.com.au/~pacedge/garden/find/nsw.html Also you could try www.geocities.com/CapeCanaveral/Lab/2218/nun.html, and www.cityfarmer.org/australia97.html I was only interested in the NSW ones, so she will have to look in Victoria. However, the lists are far from complete; they can only publish information that is supplied to them by the gardens themselves. There are none listed for Wollongong (the WCC doesn't keep a list either), but I know of two in existence and several which petered out. The South Sydney Council's website has some useful info on community gardens, composting, worm farms. There may be an equivalent in inner Melbourne. Allotments are a way of life in England and Europe, but here they seem to do best in areas of high-rise housing where people don't even get to smell the soil, let alone dig in it!

Jane Smith advocates **PAWPAW** as a healing agent. A word of

caution here. Meat tenderisers are made from pawpaw!

NAMBOUR/MALENY area info: Kay Edwards's letter coincided with an email I received from a member of Bundaberg LETS on another matter, so I replied on both. As a member of Bundaberg LETS, Kay's best option is to contact Maleny LETS (the first in Australia in 1987) nearer to the time she wants to move. With 19 co-ops in Maleny, and a good LETS system with offices open five days a week in the Maleny Credit Union building, I am sure there would be people there knowledgeable about local real estate. Today's prices and availability bear no relationship to what things might be like at the end of 2003.

CANDIDA ALBICANS: I am astounded at the number of women who write of this problem. A visit to a naturopath, the library, or a health website, perhaps? Eating plain yoghurt or Yakult might help. As it is an alkaline condition, the old-fashioned remedy of douching with a small amount of vinegar in warm water (one tablespoon vinegar to 600 millimetres water) could help.

P Ferguson,

65 Cotterill Ave, WOONONA 2517.

Dear Ladies,

I believe June Birkett is to be commended for her article, 'Beware of the Bull', and you for publishing it in GR149, because people too often these days do not appear to realise how dangerous all male animals on the farm can be, especially those many that are much stronger than we.

Our dad died when we children were young and Mum's repeated injunction to us was, 'Don't let him hurt you,' when we were working about the stallion, bull, ram and, even, rooster. Everything in June's article is true. Terrible things have happened on farms when people forget how dangerous the male animals can be. I saw a cousin broken completely when his bull flicked his hindquarters as they went through a gate together, trapping him against the post. As June writes, a bull can move quickly when aroused. At rest, they appear to be slow and cumbersome, but any bull can be at full speed in a few metres, be moving like a diesel engine with such beauty, athleticism, and deadly purpose when defending his cows that the sight chills the blood even as we watch in admiration.

Too, I support June's caution regarding cows. Each year men are badly injured when marking calves. In this situation a good dog is a treasure, but it must be good and not just something cringing under the yard rails or running around yapping and exciting the cow to further damage you. It would be better if we never worked alone with our animals at close quarters, but that is not possible always so we must try to work cautiously, watching for the warning signs and offering our respect to **ANIMALS WHICH CAN INJURE US SO BADLY**.

Bill Dowsley,

'Woodgreen', WOMBEYAN via TARALGA 2580.

Dear Grass Roots People,

I am currently researching and writing my sixth book. My intention is that this book will include a range of simple herbal remedies. As part of the research I want to tap into the wisdom that exists in the community in all cultures. In particular I want to learn about, and record, any **SIMPLE HERBAL REMEDIES** that have been passed down through the generations. These recipes would need to have been used on a regular basis (ie tried and tested) and to be made from ingredients that can be grown in the average garden or that are otherwise readily available. If any readers have a herbal remedy of this sort, I would be very grateful if they could write it down and send it to me at the postal or email address below. They would need to include a return address so that I can check details, if necessary. When the book is published I will send a free copy to anyone whose recipe is included.

Penny Woodward,

RMB 6715, BALNARRING 3926.

Email: woodycoa@surf.net.au

Health tips are printed for readers' information and interest. *Grass Roots* staff, and most Feedback writers, are not qualified to offer specific advice for the treatment of serious medical conditions. Readers are urged to always consult a qualified practitioner of the desired modality. ☸

FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

Dear Grass Roots,

I'm just writing in response to Vicki Judd's article 'COUNTRY LIVING NOT FOR EVERYONE' (GR149). It made me really sad. These are the sort of things our family say to us when we tell them of our dreams of moving to the country. If we lived in fear like this we would not enjoy life. Regarding a person who can't drive not being able to catch the school bus because of insurance, it's likely that another passer-by would offer a lift, it's just the way it works (I know from experience).

I agree that country living isn't for everyone (perhaps not Vicki herself); but for us, we can't wait until next year when we move near to the Bega area. For us, the further from the hospital the better. Our kids are three years and one year and have never seen a medical person (sniffles, coughs and minor injuries are no reason to go to the doctor). I guess it's because our trust lies elsewhere. Doctors are just people. You can educate yourselves to handle a wide variety of medical needs.

So, to anyone who has become a bit fearful of the 'what ifs' of moving to the country, I'd like to re-encourage. Go and fulfil those dreams; you'll be greatly rewarded; your lifestyle will change for the better!

Emily Flavell,
47 Forsythe St, BANKS 2906.

In many cases, existing health problems of family members make access to medical services essential.

Dear GR Readers,

I have been reading all my GRs, have all except number 17. It has taken such a long time to get through them all and I keep a notebook handy to jot down anything I may need.

Does anyone know where I can buy CUT RUG WOOL of the kind used in hooked rugs? I have some wool left over from rugs, but would like to make my own designs. As patterns and wool come together, I need more colours. Maybe someone has some oddments left over they no longer need.

Can anyone tell me how to get GRASS TREES TO GERMINATE? I only have a few seeds and I want to get it right. I think it is something to do with burning or heating.

Does anyone have STEVIA SEEDS they will part with, and how to grow them?

If you suffer from HEARTBURN OR REFLUX, don't rush to the medicine cupboard for antacid powder containing that horrid aluminium, try a glass of hot water first then another in 10 minutes. Works well for me.

Doreen Napier,
10 Oxley St, HARRINGTON 2427.

Dear Readers,

I have been trying to find where I can buy seeds for the old-fashioned TROMBONE SHAPED GRAMMA and have been unable to buy them from the seed companies I've contacted. If any readers have some seeds they can send me, I will pay for them and the postage.

Nerida Thomas,
1402 Bucketts Way, STROUD ROAD 2415.

Dear GR Readers,

My partner and I are planning to RELOCATE TO TASMANIA within the next twelve months to two years. We plan to seek employment in the health industry, but ultimately would like to become as self-sufficient as possible. My partner is a keen gardener and particularly likes natives, but is primarily interested in growing organic fruit and vegetables. We would appreciate as much information as possible that you feel would be useful: climate, preparation required to establish a fruit and vegetable patch, and types of native plants that are likely to thrive.

Cathy Fulham & John Wines,
4 Malakoff St, MARRICKVILLE 2204.

Dear GR Readers,

I would appreciate information on WATTLE SEEDS. For example, are all varieties suitable for human consumption or are some varieties better than others and some unsuitable? How does one identify the wattle trees one has? When do you harvest the pods and how do you separate the seeds from the pods?

John Exner,
2 Buena Vista Ave, WENTWORTH FALLS 2782.

Dear Grass Roots,

My partner and I and our six children are wanting to move to the Far North coast of NSW. We would like 5 - 10 acres and two dwellings (not a necessity). We would prefer to be in the hill regions, approximately 20 minutes drive to the beach. We would like the land to be close to bush, rainforest, and would love a stream. We prefer pesticide-free land. Our interests are organic growing and environmentally friendly living. My partner is a child and adolescent counsellor and I work in women's and children's health. Our children's ages range from 8 years to 14 years.

Can you assist us in our dream?

Jim & Di,
41 Sayers St, LAWSON 2783.

Dear GRs,

I have recently moved to Blackheath in the Blue Mountains and I'm immensely enjoying the mountain climate and environs. We have a bit of land and I'm slowly revitalising the neglected orchard and starting a vegie garden. Right at this moment I am excitedly waiting for a large load of manure. Progress is slow as I have a six-month-old baby girl, Tilda, who takes up most of my time. I also have to take it easy as I have a recurring MASTITIS problem.

I am writing in the hope that readers may have a natural/herbal prevention or cure for mastitis. I am yet to find a comprehensive GUIDE TO HERBS and their use. Any suggested references would be appreciated.

Rebecca Wilkinson,
35 Braeside St, BLACKHEATH 2785.

Dear Grass Roots,



Regarding the plant 'robertum' for which one reader offered seeds. Most likely it is Herb Robert, *GERANIUM ROBERTIANUM*. It is a rather weedy looking annual or biennial with an unpleasant odour. It has been used in herbal medicine to lower blood sugar, ease toothache and for kidney and bladder disorders amongst other things.

Ten to fifty centimetres tall, it has somewhat sprawling stems, divided leaves with toothed edges and rose-pink, five-petalled flowers. Many herb books have pictures of it, as do books on European wildflowers.

Connie,
PO Box 288, TENTERFIELD 2372.

Dear GR Readers,

With great enthusiasm and excitement I made MY FIRST BATCH OF SOAP this weekend - (thanks to Frank Brehe, Nimbin) - and it was quite easy. Following Frank's recipe and advice I now have four x two-litre (cut off at top) milk containers full of various coloured/fragranced soaps. My next step will be to learn how to make LAUNDRY DETERGENT. I wonder if Frank or anyone else would have the recipe? Thank you in anticipation.

Jennifer Morrin,
5 Beauty Drv, WHALE BEACH 2107.

Contributors and correspondents who want letters or articles returned are requested to include correct postage. ✉

FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

Dear GRs,

I recently bought some **VEGETARIAN PATÉ** from my local supermarket. I tried making some without a recipe. I am hoping that some readers will be able to help me with a good recipe. The one I made has sunflower seed, tamari, tahini and yeast extract.



Kate Partridge,

C/- Post Office, CONDONG 2484.

Dear GRs,

I've just grown a bumper **CROP OF SQUASH**. Has anyone any ideas for recipes or preserving techniques?

Also, is there any cheap way to **MEND A LEAKY WATER TANK** from the outside?

Kay,

9 Martin St, STOCKINBINGAL 2725.

GRs 69 and 100 had articles on patching small holes. You don't say what material the tank is made of. Other articles on tank repair were in GRs 58, 59 and 91, with repairs for galvanised tanks in GRs 35, 72 and 106.

Dear GR,

I have read *Grass Roots* for 20 years and have always looked forward to the next edition, reading it usually in the one sitting and then having to wait for another two months for the next helping. During this period I did all the usual things, 40-hour job, renovate four houses, divorce, pay maintenance and live life a day at a time, thinking one day I would buy that block and escape the city pace.

Finally the day came. I sold a house in Balmain, bought a motor home and set off, but being the impatient chap I am, I only got as far as Tuncurry and bought a waterfront block of flats near the fish markets. Alas, after three years of this, I thought this was not where I wanted to be, so I sold up and returned to Rozelle. The trouble was, in this period prices in Tuncurry had remained stable, while Sydney had boomed, the result being I left a fully renovated house in Balmain to return to a Handyman's Delight back in Rozelle. Perhaps my mistake was that instead of a 'Seachange', I should have had a 'Farmchange'? But having reached the age of too-old-to-hire, and too-young-for-the-pension, I don't know if I will ever be game to give it another try. I think before people make radical changes to their lives, they should go and rent first, before committing themselves to a life away from family and old friends.

During the final stages of this latest home renovation I broke my wrist, severing a tendon and artery at the same time. Upon being taken to Sydney Hospital, to my good luck, a Macquarie Street surgeon was doing his operations and fitted me in, thus minimising the long-term effects of this accident. This incident has made me think that if an emergency comes up, Sydney is a good place to be.

While the cottage I have is only on land 30 metres x 10 metres, which is big for this area, I try to practise the principles of *Grass Roots* as much as possible. It is possible to fit in a large range of citrus, fig, and stone fruit trees, together with vegetables and herbs in pots. Even if my harvests are small, when I eat my own fruit and vegetables it gives me a good feeling in many ways.

My thanks to Patricia Amundsen for her advice on sunspots. For 10 years I have had these burnt off with dry nitrogen, and nothing has changed, and they keep recurring, but after four weeks of aloe vera a big improvement has happened.

Life is a wonderful continuing process and now I have decided Sydney is where I want to stay. The next plan is to get a slide-on camper for my tabletop ute and go for trips of various lengths in time and distance. I hope I will not repeat my mistake of being on holiday somewhere and mistaking this for wanting to spend the rest of my life there, but who knows? I will just continue on my journey. May peace be with you all.

Greg Heffernan,

17 Alfred St, ROZELLE 2039.

Dear Megg and Mary,

I refer to the Feedback item by Lilian in GR149, regarding **ROBERTUM** seeds. You asked if any readers had any further information, and I perused my herb books as I was most interested in Lilian's assertion regarding the benefits of this plant. The book *Gallery of Medicinal Plants* has a good illustration of Herb Robert. The foliage does resemble parsley of the Italian variety, and the herb was used in medieval times (like most) for a variety of ailments. Whether or not it is helpful in the treatment of malignancies (cancer) is another matter and I would be reluctant to take it internally, as there is no mention of it being used in this manner.

Adrienne de Bouvier,

PO Box 29, PINGELLY 6308.

Dear GR Readers,

I wonder if somebody can help me locate a source of **RECYCLED BIODEGRADABLE 'PLASTIC' BAGS**. I have heard that they exist but have been unable to find a supplier. Clients often require a stronger bag than the paper one we currently use for supplies – but I don't want to use the usual supermarket-type plastic bags that pollute our environment. Perhaps *Grass Roots* magazine could do an article on biodegradable packaging products. We are really fortunate in having such a helpful and informative publication.

Dr Douglas Wilson,

The Holistic Veterinary Clinic,

308 Glen Osmond Rd, FULLARTON 5063.

Dear GR Readers,

We will be travelling from south-east Queensland to Adelaide and back from August to November this year. Upon returning we hope to begin our dream of building a mudbrick house. We have a short list of **ALTERNATIVE HOUSE TOURS** and exhibitions/fairs happening in this time and these areas, but would like to hear of any more. We would also love to hear from other owner builders who have built or are currently building in mud. Solar power, composting toilets, water waste management and organics are also of interest to us. Thanks GR for the inspiration.

M & A Hornby,

PO Box 1925, BUNDABERG 4670.

Dear Megg & Mary,

I have noticed since you put my last article in that my local hardware store now stocks whiting and my local supermarket now carries larger quantities of dried yeast. In Hay I can only buy mortar mix and sharp sand. I am looking for a supplier somewhere between Hay and Melbourne of the **FINE BRICKLAYERS' SAND** as I want to make a weak mortar to repair the top brickwork of one of my old red brick chimneys.



Alexander Cranford,

PO Box 439, HAY 2711.

Dear Grass Roots,

Thanks for a fantastic magazine. I'm writing on behalf of our local school, one of the best you could hope to find. The children are about to design a **BUSH TUCKER GARDEN** and I am asking for any advice (and/or seeds). We are situated between Maitland and Newcastle, with a high mosquito population, so any advice in that regard would also be most welcome.

In reply to Yolanda Grach, ring Credence Publications on 03-5767-2247 and ask for a catalogue. You might find a book with the right info. Good Luck.

Kate Jordan,

Farm 5, Blackhill Rd, BLACK HILL 2322.

We suggest you write to 'Australian Bush Foods' magazine, 38 Mountain View Rd, Maleny 4552 or phone them on: 07-5494-3812.

FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

Dear GR Readers,

I am a freelance writer at present living at Kookaburra Park Eco-village near Gin Gin, Qld. I am working on an article entitled 'Why people go and live in intentional alternative communities and why they leave.' I would like to make contact with ex-residents of such communities. I am interested in getting an insight and overview of things that either worked or did not work, things people miss and things people are now glad to be away from. Confidentiality of responses will be assured if this is an issue.

Mary Garden,
PO Box 460, GIN GIN 4671.
Ph: 07-4157-2842

Email: marygarden@bigpond.com.au

Dear Megg,

Can anyone help me with two problems? One is **PSORIASIS**, which I have in my hair and which is very uncomfortable. The other problem is **SINUS**. I have been to doctors, naturopaths, and still have the same problem. When I wake in the morning the bedroom smells awful. Although I open the windows during the day the smell still lingers and I would appreciate any help I could get.

Bill Knight,
9 Brodie Cres, CHRISTIES BEACH 5165.

Dear GR Readers,

Have just finished reading GR116 'Enterprise Bears Fruit', which I found in my local mobile library. I have been a GR reader for five years now and enjoy the mag very much. I was interested in finding information about budding and grafting stone fruit and **FRUIT SALAD TREES**. I have tried to contact James and Kerry West from Emmaville, but as the mag was six years old, I guess they might have moved on to another GR paradise. If any GR readers know of James and Kerry, or have any information on budding or grafting their own fruit salad trees, the information would be very much appreciated.

Clarita Harris,
16 Edgecumbe Crt, TOOMALLA BEACH 4816.
Ph: 07-4770-7463

The last address we have for James and Kerry West is: 'Willow Creek', Gulf Rd, Emmaville 2371. Ph: 02-6734-7204.

Dear GR Readers,

We built a home four years ago and were advised not to install an environcycle system (where the **GREYWATER** could be used for watering the garden etc), as the rainfall in this area should suffice. However, after two summers with water problems (we use all tank water) we would like to make use of this greywater, which, of course, is going to waste. Is anyone able to inform us of an easy and reasonably cost effective way of utilising the greywater with the septic system that we have?

Helen Rayner,
PO Box 495, CLARE 5453.
Email: rayner@capri.net.au

Dear GR Readers,

My young friend and I are going to start a self-sufficient, environmentally friendly *Grass Roots*-style **ECOVILLAGE ON A PACIFIC ISLAND** in 2003. We need help with the paperwork. Could some of you out there who are already in communes, intentional communities and MO situations please send us copies of your applicant screening procedures, land tenancy agreements, rules and regulations, codes of ethics/behaviour, and conflict resolution strategies? At 58 years, I want to benefit from the experience of others, rather than waste precious time making my own mistakes. I will happily reimburse any cost to you, via a money order, postage stamps or whatever. If you wish, I will send you a copy of our applicant screening questionnaire (as yet untried) for your evaluation and critical appraisal.

Bob McAllister,
356 Mudlo Rd, KILKIVAN 4600.

Dear Megg,

Please find enclosed my cheque for one year's subscription to *Grass Roots*. I used to be an avid reader about 20 years ago, but many things have happened in that time, and my life has taken many directions. As much as I find expressions like 'reconnecting' a little overused, and because of that a bit corny, that is precisely what I am doing. **RECONNECTING**. It is so good to be reading *Grass Roots* again. Can't believe how time has flown.

I have an old copy from the library, GR144 April/May 2001. In Feedback there is a letter from Tamsenne Grogan, at that time from Maryknoll in Victoria. In the letter she writes of her family moving to, possibly, the Nambucca Valley area, and talks about home schooling with the Steiner approach. I would like to get in touch with her. Can anyone advise me of her new address?

Thanks for your help and am really looking forward to all future editions.

Beverley Neil,
14 Montrose Pl, REDLAND BAY 4165.

Dear GRs,

I've been buying GR mag on and off for a couple of years now. I've always toyed with the idea of self-sufficiency, but have only recently started doing something about it. I started recycling anything and everything I would have normally thrown out. I'm slowly educating my boyfriend. He quite often gives me bewildered looks and asks what on earth I want to keep something for. 'Just in case it comes in handy.' I've discovered that small yoghurt pots make great candle moulds.

We've also just built some no-dig garden beds (for vegies, herbs and flowers) and a compost heap. I have a lovely brew of compost happening, but the local magpies seem to think it's an all-you-can-eat buffet.

We're considering getting a small farm in the future and hope to be mostly self-sufficient. If anyone has made the change, I'd love to hear any stories (good and bad) and advice you might have. I'd also love to hear from anyone making a living from alternative agriculture - herb nursery/farming, native bee keeping, olives, aquaculture and the like. I want to be able to do as much research as possible. Also, does anyone have any recipes they can share for soap, shampoo, cleaning products, polishes and other household potions that do not require caustic soda, metho, turps or other harsh chemicals? They need to be suitable for someone with chemical sensitivities.

Does anyone have plans to make their own washboard and clothes wringer? Or know where I could find them?

C Veal,
44 Barron St, BOYUP BROOK 6244.

Visit your nearest library and look through their back copies of GR. You will find all the information you are after. Also look for a copy of 'Chemical-Free Home' by Robin Stewart.

Dear GR,

Thanks for the article on the **DANGERS OF BULLS**. I recently read about some sad incidents which have occurred in the US. Someone there has designed a simple but effective 'blinker' that deters a bull from charging. The blinker, which goes over the bull's eyes, obstructs the view of its victim as it lowers its head to charge. Apparently, this puts the bull off. I can't find the original advertisement for the blinkers, but it was in 'Plain Interests', 550 Weaver Rd, Millersburg, PA 17061, USA. For more information folks can write to me and I'll make a concerted effort to find out.

Louisa Danen,
PO Box 7991, TOOWOOMBA MC 4352.

Please keep letters brief, clearly written and relevant to self-sufficiency topics. Letters pushing barrows (religious, political or other) will not be published. ☹

FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

To all Grass Roots Feedback Readers,

I need to clarify a matter that has been bothering me for a little while. In 1999 to 2000 I placed some wanted ads in *Grass Roots* magazine and I got a few replies, which I was grateful for; but unfortunately, due to reasons beyond my control, I did not receive all the letters and material that people sent me. This was due to the fact that I was not receiving my mail as I should. This has since been rectified. In no instance did I intend to offend any persons. I do not like my name to be tarnished in any way. In most cases I have responded to all the mail that I have received. I hope this explains the situation.

Michelle,

PO Box 2169, MT GAMBIER 5290.

Dear GR,

I have recently taken over co-ordinating an art and craft group for disabled people and am looking for **IDEAS FOR A VARIETY OF CRAFTS**. All suggestions would be greatly appreciated. Thanks in anticipation.

Siobhan South,

49 Rosebery St, BAYSWATER 6053.

Email: ssouth2000@hotmail.com.au

Dear GR Readers,

I have a few answers to queries in GR149.

FLAX SEED: You can buy this in health food shops as 'lin-seed'. I don't know about the growing conditions, except that it grows through winter. Experiment with a small patch first.

WATERCRESS can be grown in a pond, but it's not necessary. I have grown it each winter for many years in an old concrete wash trough – any wide container will do, it doesn't have to be very deep. Sow in autumn by sprinkling a few seeds on to rich soil (lots of compost) and keep well watered but not waterlogged. Pick the tips often to encourage branching; each plant can cover nearly one metre square when fully grown. It will go to seed in early summer and self-sows readily each year.

TOMATO SEEDS: Squeeze seeds into a small jar, barely cover with water and leave two to three days to ferment. This will prevent some seed-borne diseases. Pour the seeds into a fine strainer and flush off the pulp under running water. Spread out to dry (foam meat trays are ideal) and rub with your fingers to separate when fully dry. Seeds can be kept for some time in envelopes in a cool, dark place.

CANDIDA: Dairy products and sugars in any form are the main culprits. This includes dried fruit, honey, fruit juices and many other everyday foods. It's best to consult a good naturopath, who can also recommend various medications to help the condition and check on your progress. It took me about nine months on a fairly rigid diet to eliminate it, but eating rich food at Christmas brought back some of the symptoms.

Now a question: Many years ago I used to marinate mussels and squid in brine and vinegar, but I've lost the recipe. Can any reader help? How much brine to vinegar, and how do you go about it?

Thanks for a great magazine.

Julie Woodman,

11 Urch Rd, ROLEYSTONE 6111.

Dear GR,

I can still remember Sharon and I back in suburban Melbourne looking forward with anticipation to our dream of rural bliss. That was some eight years ago now. Have we learned a lot! However, the important aspect is we have survived to tell the tale and in the process the journey has provided us and our five children with a learning experience unobtainable in conventional suburban living.

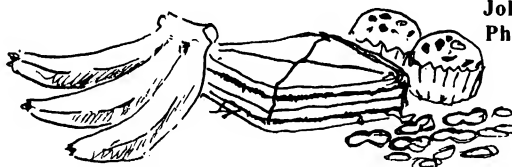
From Oakleigh in Melbourne, we headed towards the beautiful environs of the Bega Valley on the far southern coast of NSW. Having spent the previous year in Melbourne working on activities with Permaculture Melbourne, what struck me most about the Bega Valley was how secluded it was. This seclusion extends to the flow of information and knowledge on all matters pertaining to sustainable living and land use. For instance, Bega is known throughout

the world for its famous Bega cheese, yet there was not one organic biodynamic farm in the area! This was 1994 and it was not until 2001 that the first 'in conversion' certification began.

Because it is halfway between Australia's major cities of Sydney and Melbourne, it has developed more slowly than other regions. The tyranny of distance has been beneficial in that we have observed well the mistakes and the achievements of other seaside regions and have developed our own models based on our water catchment, our soils and our energy. We are in the process of building a community. What makes this process wonderful is that people who move here want to live here and that the fundamental building blocks of sustainable future grassroot networks are strong and in place.

When we learn to join the dots and link those networks effectively, south-east Australia will begin to emerge as a beacon for rural survival in a landscape focused on globalisation with no fresh ideas. The networks referred to include a very active LETS group, Mumbulla School for Rudolf Steiner Education (K-6), the innovative growers cooperative known as the Sapphire Coast Producers Association (SCPA) and Environment Network, permaculture activity, arts, religious and gay groups. As well, it is a destination increasingly enjoyed by WWOOFers. They are all in place ready to grow and it's at this point in time we face a dilemma! We need more folk. We cannot hide from the fact that the region will develop and the population will increase and have impacts on the surroundings we cherish most. However, its destiny will be determined by who moves here, what they do and what options and regulations are in place to provide for their needs. Each year towards the end of winter an event known as the South Coast Field Days attempts to showcase aspects of **SUSTAINABLE LAND USE AND LIVING**. With over 100 exhibits, keynote speakers, workshops, farm and house tours, we provide visitors with a glimpse of a seachange and invite them to join us in the development of the community. Dates for this year are 27 and 28 July.

John Champagne,
Ph: 02-6492-7306.



Dear GR Readers,

With a large family, our food bill for **SCHOOL LUNCHES** alone would be ridiculously expensive if packed with all the fad foods available. At present, the children take sandwiches or rice crackers, homemade biscuits/cakes, and things like boiled eggs, cheese, corn or fruit. However, I'd like to 'spruce' things up a bit and hope some readers might have recipes for muesli bars, nice icings, roll cakes, muffins, or just things that are different.

I also enjoy **CROSS-STITCH**, but with my limited time they only get finished if quick and easy. Do any readers have any designs that can be done in a couple of nights?

And finally, I love **DAFFODILS** but, once again, our limited finances won't stretch as far as to let me buy the amount I'd like. Do any readers have any bulbs they'd be prepared to part with, or know where I can buy a heap really cheaply?

And finally (again!), I'd love to correspond with readers who've started market gardens from scratch or who have a large family.

Mellita Reinke,

108 Robert St, SURAT 4417.

There were a variety of muesli bar recipes in GR110 and muffin recipes were in GRs 121 and 122.

Contributors and correspondents who want letters or articles returned are requested to include correct postage. ✉

RECYCLING RUNS RIOT

Tyre Tanks

by Roberino, Arrawarra Beach, NSW.

Old car and truck tyres are an embarrassing residue of our modern world. I hate to think of how many tyres I've used in my lifetime, I used to use five tyres in one day when I raced cars; now older and wiser, I use four tyres in four years.

Car tyres cost \$3 – \$5 each to dispose of; truck tyres \$15, tractor tyres \$30 plus. If you approach a tyre shop and volunteer to dispose of them at the same price or less, you will have greatly balanced your farm cost books and got many useful things around the farm for very little cost.

If you somehow joined them together in a stack, you could make a container, effectively a drum, even a very long drum, or pipe. These tyre stacks have a multitude of uses, either vertically or horizontally, and are surprisingly solid if joined strongly together: small tree/shrub pots, vegie gardens, dog kennels for small dogs (a board for a floor), stormwater drains under paths and tracks, bridges, tables, feed bins.

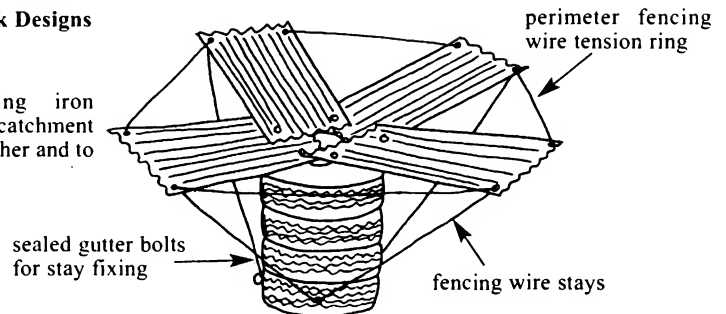
WATER TANK

For Shower/Bath

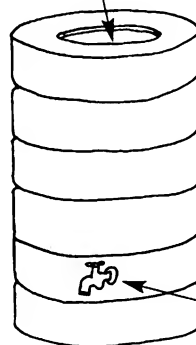
Take four or more tyres of the same size and join them as shown in the diagram. Being black they get hot in the sun and so does the water inside, so by

Alternative Tank Designs

Recycled roofing iron increases water catchment area, bolted together and to top tyre.



secure cover to make it childproof



This tank won't rust.

don't forget the tap

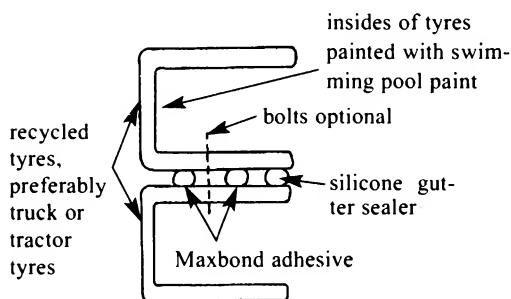
the time you finish work in the afternoon you'll have enough hot water for a shower. By simply painting the insides of the tyres with swimming pool paint you would achieve an odour-free, long-lasting result. Leave the paint to dry thoroughly of course

for a week, even apply a second coat to be really sure.

In high wind areas tall stacks of tyre-tanks should be securely fastened to each other and to the ground via a substantial concrete slab. If in doubt get a structural engineer's opinion.

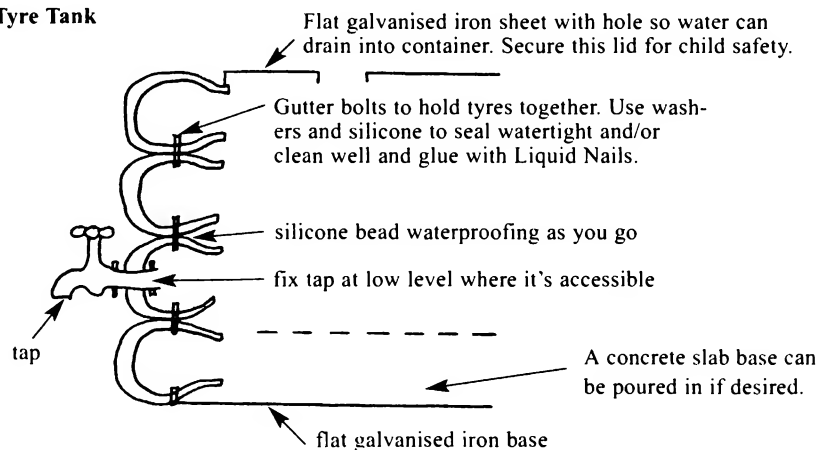
For Drinking

When using tyres to form a cheap non-rusting water tank, you should have an approved heavy vinyl liner or bladder if it's to be used for drinking. These are readily available, made to your requirements, and are used in fibreglass tanks as some people say the resin is carcinogenic. A liner would certainly ensure that the tank is 100 percent waterproof. Should a leak develop, it's easily plugged with silicone, as silicone cures under water.



Cross section showing how tyres are joined and sealed. Bolts and large washers can also be used. Clean all surfaces prior to gluing, sealing and painting.

Tyre Tank



I remember seeing a TV documentary on some outback mining works and there were lots of *huuge* old tyres off those mountainous dump trucks (the ones you climb up a ladder to get into the driver's cabin). What a great opportunity for a large water tank or two in an unusually dry environment.

To permanently join two or more tyres together glue them with a bead of Liquid Nails where they touch or with about four or five gutter bolts, after drilling the necessary holes. Sewing

together with light nylon cord after drilling is another possibility.

Where the tyres touch is the best place to drill at least five holes evenly spaced around tyres. You can mark out the flat galvanised iron base and use it as a template. Make a north mark on everything before you begin, so you don't get confused as to where everything should line up in its correct relationship. Use tyres of the same size. Don't make the stack too tall unless it's anchored to something substantial,

or you might have three or four stacks beside each other and strapped together for stability in a high wind. The more stacks there are together the more stable they will be. The older crossply tyres are more rigid and better than the squishy sidewall radials for the bottom of the pile.

Next time more terrific uses for those old tyres that are hanging around the farm, including plant tubs, work benches, storage bins, bridges and dog kennels. ♣

CAPE GOOSEBERRY PRESERVES

In GR 150 Dot Everson was asking about recipes using cape gooseberry. Here are two that are delicious.

CAPE GOOSEBERRY JAM

2.5 kg cape gooseberries
2 kg sugar
225 ml cold water

Remove the husks from the berries and weigh. Prick with a darning needle and place fruit and sugar in alternate layers in preserving pan. Add water

and boil gently until setting point is reached and the syrup jells when poured onto a cold plate. The juice of a lemon or a small teaspoon of tartaric acid may be added just before the jam is ready.

CAPE GOOSEBERRY AND MELON

2.5 kg pie or jam melon
4 kg sugar
2.5 kg cape gooseberries
2 lemons

Peel the melon, remove seeds and weigh. Put into preserving pan and sprinkle with 2 kilograms sugar and leave overnight. In the morning bring to boil and add remaining sugar. Boil until the melon looks clear, then add the cape gooseberries, after removing husks, weighing and pricking each berry with a darning needle. Add the lemon juice and boil until setting point is reached – about four hours. ♣

Colin Law

PERMACULTURE DESIGN CERTIFICATE COURSE

with

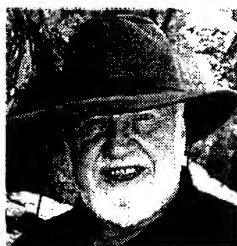
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KIDS PAGE

THE OUTBACK



The year 2002 is the year of the Outback - a chance to celebrate the land and people from the heart of Australia. It is the vast interior of Australia that is generally known as the outback. Towns are scattered throughout, but much of it is desert and large sheep and cattle stations. An official Year of the Outback document reminds us that 'Australia's outback has no specific boundaries but begins and ends in our minds'. In fact, much of what we consider 'typically Australian' is actually 'typically outback' so even though the 85 percent of Australians who live in the coastal cities don't have kangas or thorny devils in their backyards, they feel very connected to them and other peculiarly Aussie things such as our foods and sayings.

A Colourful Devil

Colour in this happy thorny devil. Thorny devils are Australian desert lizards, easily identifiable by the many large spines covering both body and tail.



Make Some Damper

Damper is classic outback food and was traditionally made by bushmen. They cooked it in campfires and, because the outside burned, they broke it open and ate only the soft inside part.

Ingredients:

- 2 cups SR flour
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1 cup milk, approx
- 2 tsp sugar
- 1 tsp butter, optional

Sift flour and salt, add sugar. Rub in butter with fingers. Mix well with enough milk to make soft dough, then knead lightly. Pat into a round shape and place on greased baking tray. Glaze with milk and bake in a hot oven for 10 minutes,

reduce to moderate oven and bake a further 10 minutes (approximately).

Facts

- ★ In 1911 about 43 percent of Australians lived in rural areas, now it's about 15 percent.
- ★ The Australian Desert is the second largest desert in the world (3,800,000 sq km). The world's largest desert is the Sahara Desert in North Africa (9,000,000 sq km).
- ★ The Alice Springs School of the Air is the world's largest classroom with a 1.3 million sq km broadcast area
- ★ The highest ever temperature officially recorded in Australia is 53° C in Cloncurry, Western Queensland in 1889.
- ★ The Royal Flying Doctor services 80 percent of Australia.

Jokes

- ★ What is the best year for a kangaroo? A leap year.
- ★ Why do koalas carry their babies on their backs? Because it is hard pushing a pram up a tree.
- ★ What goes pad, pad, pad, squish? A Tasmanian devil with a wet sneaker.

Bush Lingo Word Search

Find the following 16 Aussie words: gday, hooroo, mate, ute, sheila, dunny, grouse, joey, digger, bloke, tucker, chook, barbie, arvo, mozzie, sanger.

Do you know what they all mean?

S A N G E R B J
C M A T E U C S K
H O O R O O T H S
O Z B A R B I E D
O Z T B F L A I U
K I U D L O R L N
O E C I O K V A N
S V K G J E O S Y
P I E G R O U S E
A O R E D P E Q
V L S R P A O Y
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IN THE KITCHEN

You can't beat a fresh apple for crispness and flavour. Apples are available year-round in most areas, though stored supermarket varieties can often be disappointing. Buy them fresh and in season for best taste and highest nutrition. You're never stuck for a delicious dessert or a healthy snack as long as there are apples in the house.

Apples can be used fresh, raw, cooked, dried, puréed, jellied, or in preserves. They are a moderately good source of vitamin C and dietary fibre and their pectin content is said to be helpful in eliminating radiation and toxic metal residues and in reducing cholesterol. They contain malic acid, said to remove harmful gut bacteria, and both apples and juice are reputedly beneficial for the liver and gall bladder.

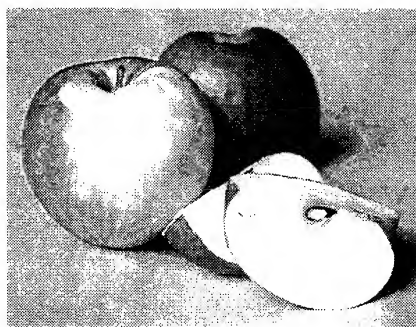
Ripe apples can be stored in a refrigerator for up to four weeks, especially if not touching each other. Do not store with vegetables because apples give off ethylene gas which can cause many vegetables to deteriorate quickly or to become bitter.

There are literally hundreds of apple varieties to choose from when growing your own. The choice is very much more limited when it comes to buying them from the supermarket. When possible, buy apples in season rather than those from controlled atmosphere storage. You should be able to buy fresh apples from February through to June. Of the commonly available varieties look for Royal Gala in early February; Jonathon, Abas and Red Delicious in March; Granny Smith, Golden Delicious, Fuji and Pink Lady in April to May; Bonza in May; Lady Williams in May to June.

When using raw, cut apple in salads or platters brush pieces with lemon or lime juice diluted in water to prevent browning. Likewise, if drying apple slices, brush them with citrus juice or soak in salted water (50 grams salt to five litres water) beforehand. Pat excess water from slices on a clean tea towel or paper towel before beginning the drying process. An easy drying method is to suspend cored slices on a length of dowel in an airy spot, but not in direct sun, bringing them in each night, until the slices have the consistency of chamois. Packed into airtight

containers between layers of white paper, the dried apple will keep for at least six months. Use as snacks, in muesli, or in cooking. To reconstitute, soak in cold water for eight hours, or in boiling water for about half an hour. Stew until tender.

Of the commonly available apples, Granny Smith (tart flavour) and Golden Delicious (sweeter flavour) are recommended for baking and to use in pies. Less common varieties also suitable for baking include Gloria Mundi, Gooseberry Pippin, Twenty Ounce, Gravenstein, Rome Beauty and King of Tomkins County.



BAKED APPLE

1 apple per person

For Stuffing:

(quantity for about six apples)

1/4 cup chopped dates

1/4 cup chopped dried apricots

2 tbsp crystallised ginger, finely chopped

1/2 tsp ground cinnamon

1 tsp finely chopped lemon peel

2 tbsp brown sugar, optional

1/4 cup finely chopped nuts, your choice

For Sauce:

2 tbsp lemon juice

1 cup orange juice

2 heaped tbsp honey

2 tbsp port or sherry, optional

Lightly oil a baking dish. Wash and core apples, peel them halfway down. Arrange apples in baking dish. Mix stuffing ingredients and spoon into

core holes. Combine sauce ingredients in a saucepan, heat, stirring till honey liquifies. Pour sauce over apples evenly. Bake in moderate oven, spooning sauce over apples, till apples are tender. After removing from oven, spoon sauce over apples several times as they cool to a comfortable eating temperature. Serve with ice cream, sour cream or yoghurt if desired.

APPLE BUTTER

2 kg apples, peeled, cored and chopped

400 ml water

400 ml sugar

4 tbsp lemon juice

finely diced rind of 1 large lemon

powdered ginger to taste, optional,

or,

powdered cinnamon to taste, optional

2 tsp finely chopped nuts, optional

Place chopped apples in a saucepan and pour the water over. Bring to boil and simmer till tender. Allow to cool slightly for safe handling then vitamise or push through sieve. Place pulp in saucepan, add sugar, lemon juice and rind. Simmer till desired consistency is reached. Add desired spices and/or nuts and stir through well before removing from heat. Spoon into sterilised bottles and seal. Store in refrigerator. Use on bread or biscuits, as a sauce to accompany meat dishes, or as the base for apple punch, below.

APPLE PUNCH

apple pulp as made above with desired spices but without nuts

apple cider, alcoholic if desired

mineral water or dry ginger ale

To each cup of chilled apple pulp in a large jug, add 2 cups apple cider and 1 cup mineral water or dry ginger. Proportions can be changed, to taste. Stir well. Serve with lemon slices and/or fresh mint leaves. ☞

Roberino's Favourite Soup

by Roberino, Arrawarra Beach, NSW.



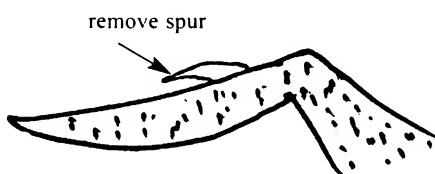
Since GR144 I've had numerous letters asking for my favourite soup. Well this soup was 'invented' by chance in the most extraordinary way back in the early 1980s while I was living in Los Angeles. I thought it so good that, luckily, I wrote it down at the time.

I don't know what to call it because it was a combination of two soups from an old backwoods second-hand cookbook bought at an op shop just near those terrible riots they had in the mid 1990s. Why it was a mix of two soup recipes I'll explain later.

MY FAVOURITE SOUP

4 medium potatoes
1 red sweet potato
1/3 celery bunch
1 parsnip
1 carrot
4 chicken wings
1 slice bacon
2 lge leeks
6 lge garlic cloves
1 bunch flat leaf parsley
2 tsp sugar
1 1/2 lt water
600 ml milk
2 tbsp flour
mustard seeds
cumin seeds
1 head of thyme (fresh)
1 cup arborio rice
6 small red chillies (whole, do not chop up)
sour cream, croutons etc

Wash vegies and chicken wings and dice vegies. Dice bacon and sauté in a tablespoon of peanut oil. When all the bacon is crisp remove for later.



Sauté chicken wings until well browned, being sure to remove the spurs from the wing tips as they can cause serious injury to your mouth or insides if swallowed.

I find it best to dismember the wings into three major parts about now as it's difficult when they are frozen solid. Add cumin and mustard seeds.

Meanwhile, in a separate large pot with 1 1/2 litres water, boil the vegies up.

When the wings are quite browned remove for later. When the vegies are half-cooked and still firm remove with a long-handled sieve, a very useful tool available in Asian kitchen shops etc.

Place the par-boiled vegies into the chicken and bacon fat, a little at a time and when thoroughly browned place in the large plate with the chicken wings and bacon pieces. When all vegies are browned pour some of the vegie-boiling-pot's water into the frypan or pot where all the sauté procedure has happened, to collect all the juices remaining, then pour into the large vegie boiling pot.

Return all the vegies, chicken wings and bacon into the big boiling pot and simmer till the vegies are soft enough for you. When you add the major ingredients into the pot also add the arborio rice, diced garlic, fresh thyme, sugar, chopped parsley. Test rice before serving.

When ready to serve, add the milk and allow to just come to the boil, mix the flour with a little cold water until smooth and stir into the soup. Cook one minute more.

Salt and pepper to taste. Serve with croutons, crunchy noodles or corn chips and a dollop of sour cream.

Leave out any ingredients you're allergic to. Remove whole chillies unless you're fireproof.

Now as to why this soup is a 'one of a kind' and never to be found anywhere else in any cookbook ever.

One afternoon my girlfriend and I visited some of her hippie friends at a suitably scruffy and dilapidated farmhouse up in the San Fernando Valley, to the east of Los Angeles. It looked like the Bates Motel manager's house in the 'Psycho' film, but once inside it was all psychedelic posters, wall hangings, mirrors, stained glass windows and a very relaxed ambience, with a couple of piglets lounging on beanbags and heaps of large velvet cushions and velvet curtains. The Yanks knew how to do it. Anyhow, one of the girls who shared the house had made some brownies – a type of biscuit. I couldn't eat because I'd just had a tooth filled, but my girlfriend really hacked into them and by the time we drove home she was giggling and chuckling away at everything. Very strange. Anyway, she started to cook quite early as she said she was starving and got out a cookbook I'd bought that morning. The meal took ages to cook and she kept losing the page in the cookbook and the soup ended up as a combination of various (at least two) recipes.

Years later I twigged to what had happened and it was lucky I'd been to the dentist because I was driving and I'd probably still be trying to negotiate the Panama Canal on my way to South America. ♪



TOMATO TIP

As winter sets in, dig chopped up banana skins into the area where you plan to plant your tomatoes in spring. They prepare the soil beautifully. ♪

SHEPHERD'S PIE

Mother's and Mine

by Ken Woods, Shoreham, Vic.

Shepherd's pie remains a firm family favourite, even though the recipe we use today differs significantly from that used by my mother, and grandmother. Changing tastes, availability of 'new' ingredients, and greater knowledge about nutrition have all played a part in the development of our modern shepherd's pie recipe.

Changes in our vegie gardens are reflected in our eating habits. Mother certainly did not grow garlic. Grosse Lisse and Burnley Bounty were *the* tomatoes to grow. No peppers or capsicums were in the garden. There were several varieties of beans, along with Brown Spanish, white onions and many other vegies which grew so well in Essendon's rich loamy soil.

Mother made all jams, pickles and sauces used in our home. My sister made one sauce when Mother was ill. Somehow she made a slight mistake, using *ten* times the quantity of *garlic*. The sauce was consigned to the workshop – two banana boxes full. Dad always came home for dinner and one day he brought home a market gardener from Keilor to partake in a hot roast dinner. Now, Dad wanted a very big contract with the gardener. The war had just ended and materials were scarce and on permits. The market gardener told Mother her sauce was very good, nearly as strong as his wife's sauce! A bottle of the 'workshop sauce' was brought to the table and opened. One sniff and Dad had his contract and his friend had two boxes of sauce and the special recipe.

MOTHER'S SHEPHERD'S PIE

Mother's ingredients included the following. I'm not sure of quantities and they were probably not accurately measured anyway:

Leftovers of roast beef and/or leg of mutton with bacon trimmings – there was usually a side of smoked, honey cured bacon in the pantry.

Gravy to add moisture to the meat



Ken's granddaughter Kylie helps prepare his 2002 shepherd's pie.

during cooking. I remember clarified fat, white flour and rich homemade tomato sauce being cooked in the pan until thickened, then set aside.

Boiled and mashed potatoes (Extons of Kinglake), enough for a 25-millimetre topping, seasoned with freshly ground pepper.

With the fire burning well for roasting and the mincer screwed to the kitchen table, meat and several onions were chopped, minced and, with some dripping to prevent burning, placed in the pan and simmered until the onion was cooked, then ladled into the metal baking dish along with the gravy. This was covered evenly with the previously mashed potato, to which a generous tablespoon of butter had been added along with some milk, pepper and salt. Mother topped this with grated cheese and freshly ground black pepper. It was then put in the oven to thoroughly heat the pie and melt and brown the cheese topping. Then to the table and a hungry family.

OUR 2002 UPDATE

4 onions and 4 garlic cloves, peeled and chopped

1/2 kg shaved ham, chopped

30 cm spicy kabana, chopped

These ingredients are cooked with a tablespoon of olive oil in a pan and spread in a ceramic baking dish.

Six large potatoes (Extons of Kinglake), peeled, sliced and microwaved for 18 minutes on high, then mashed with some milk, then set aside for pie topping.

Next, 1/2 Chinese cabbage, shredded and stirred through with the juice of one lemon.

4 sticks of celery, chopped

2 cups of green peas and sweet corn

2 large carrots, finely chopped

1 red or green capsicum sliced into thin strips

a lump of swede turnip cut into small pieces

A bunch of asparagus was chopped and added into a recent pie.

While these vegies are being

microwaved for eight minutes on high, four or five large eggs should be well whisked up so that when the microwaved vegies are laid into the baking dish, covering the meat and onion mix, the whisked eggs are poured over the top.

Several large mushrooms are peeled and sliced and laid over the vegies, followed by the mashed potatoes, which are covered with sliced, grated or shredded cheese and a sprinkle of black pepper.

Then the prepared pie goes into the fan-forced electric oven, at about 180° C, until the pie is showing some bubbles and the topping is lightly browned. This quantity will serve eight. ♣

Ken and grandsons Brett and Aaron putting finishing touches to the pie.



Grow Your Own Mustard

by Sally Carr, Nagambie, Vic.

Mustards are part of the Cruciferae family and are easy plants to grow. They prefer full sun and rich well-drained soil with a pH of around 4.2 – 6.0. The best mustard seeds for making the condiment of the same name are white and black. *Brassica hirta* and *B. alba* are the white mustard seeds, while *Brassica nigra* seeds are black (synonym *Sinapsis*).

These annuals grow easily from seed that has been directly sown in shallow beds in spring in cold climates, or autumn in warm climates. Avoid using excessive quantities of manure to prepare the beds as this can harm the delicate roots. Mustards are drought- and frost-tolerant and self-sow readily (take care, they can become weedy). *B. hirta* grows to around 1.2 metres, while *B. nigra* has more branches and grows to 1.8 metres. Mustard is rich in potassium, phosphorous, iron, calcium and has more vitamin A than lettuce.

A native of India, *B. juncea* or Red Giant is the most commonly available (and more expensive) mustard today

and is grown commercially because the pungent brown seeds are less likely to shatter. It is a hybrid of *B. rapa* and *B. nigra*, but is drought- and frost-tender.

Like other members of the cabbage family, mustards can suffer from caterpillar pests. Try spraying with Dipel or a pepper, wormwood, garlic or quassia spray. Dust or spray with derris as a last resort. The leaves from mustard make great soil-enriching and cleansing green manure but you will need to grow extra to your requirements for mustard seed because for optimum benefit, the plants should be dug into the soil when still green. The plants set aside for seed production will dry off so are not suitable for green manure.

Mustards may be sown at regular intervals so you can enjoy the young leaves and flowers with salad, but don't sow varieties together as they all grow at different rates. Cut bushes to ground level once the seeds are no longer green, but before whole pods are totally brown. Place branches in

paper bags and hang them up to dry prior to collecting seeds. Apart from being used as the primary ingredient in pungent table mustards, seeds are an essential item in many Asian dishes, they add a kick to pickles and chutneys, and mustard oil is prized for its antifungal and antibacterial qualities.

B. nigra is not that easy to obtain, but *B. hirta*, *B. alba* and *B. juncea* are available from New Gippsland Seeds and Bulbs (ph: 03-9737-9560) and Eden Seeds (ph: 07-5533-1107). ♣

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CANNY CURRAWONG DISCOURAGEMENT

by Alan Stewart, Alexandra Hills, Qld.

There has been an explosion in the number of currawongs in suburban backyards. They are not only surviving the winter in record numbers, but are eliminating smaller bird species by eating the hatchlings.

An answer to this problem had been bugging me on and off for some time. An obvious solution is, of course, an enclosed box. However, many small birds won't use these, preferring instead a ledge or fork of a branch. This makes them easy prey for larger more aggressive birds.

I experiment from time to time with designs for fruit fly deterrents. It was while assembling some of these units I realised that with some small modifications they just might solve the predation problem.

The shelters consist of a Zincalume platform with a curved roof. The platform and roof are bolted together and hung in appropriate trees. Two strips of timber screwed to each long side on the top of the platform should help keep birds and nesting material from falling off.

The shelters are open on both sides with an overhang so that larger birds

Simply bend the platform at each end, 30 mm will do. Use vice and hammer, then clamp loop and base and drill through. Bolt one end then the other. Be careful in case of springing back. An overhang of about 150 mm on each side will protect nesting birds.

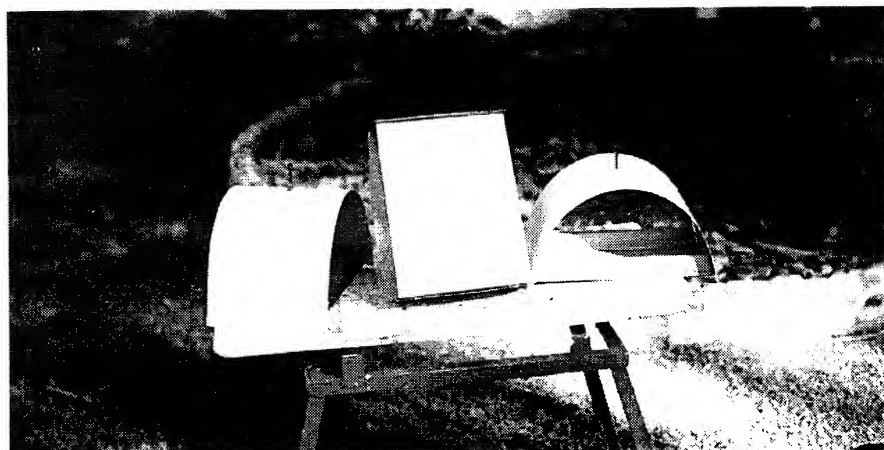
Two small nuts and bolts and washers at each end.

Finally, small scraps of wood cut to size, clamp and drill for wood screws, attached to the long sides of the platform top.

Platform: 170 x 370 mm

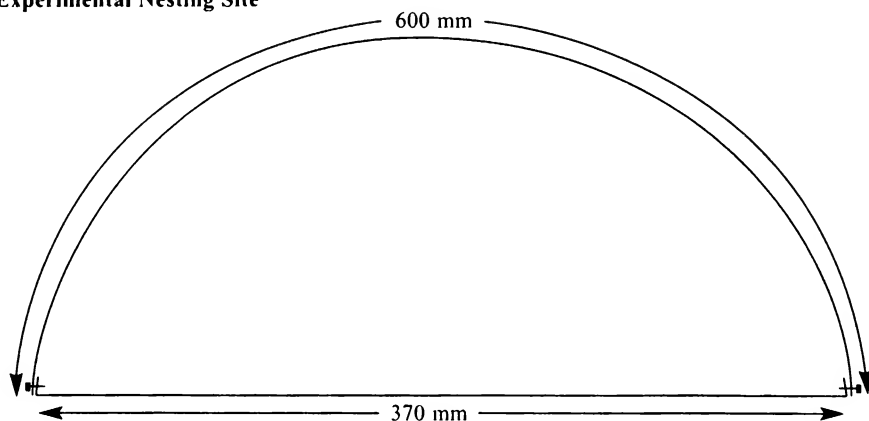
Roof For Nest Site: 600 x 470 mm

Roof For Fruit Fly Deterrent: 500 x 170 mm

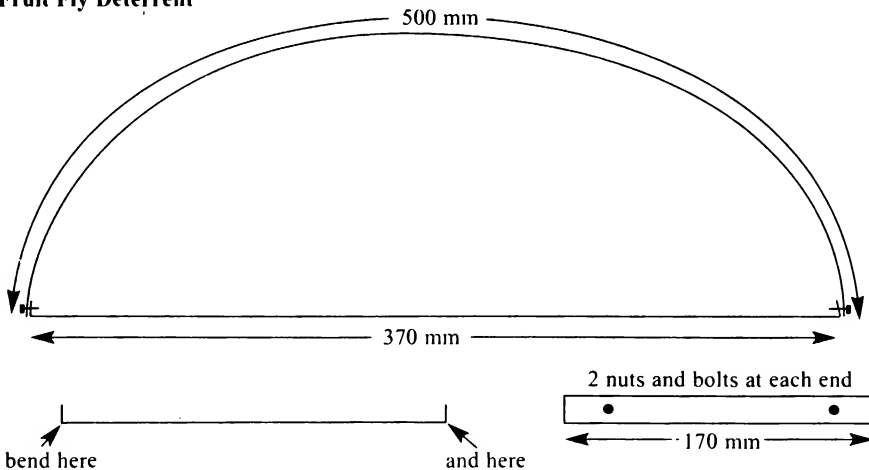


A multi-use device, simply made from scrap materials.

Experimental Nesting Site

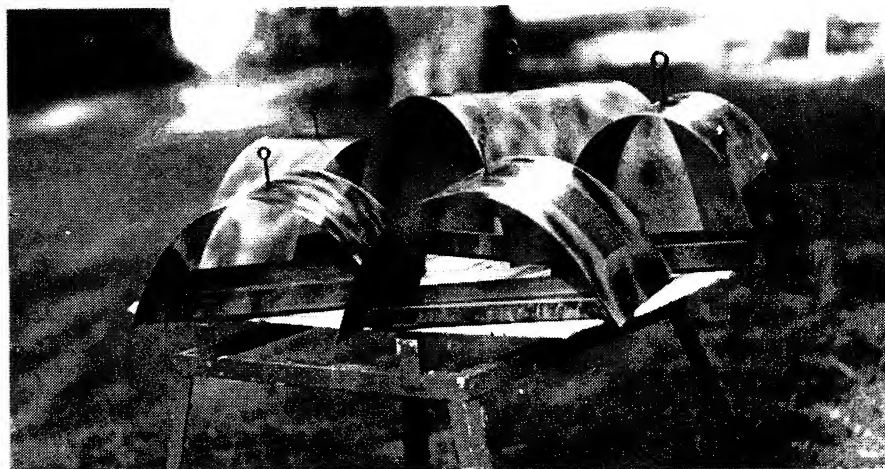


Fruit Fly Deterrent





Use to hang a fruit fly lure.



An overhang on each side should prevent predator birds from reaching eggs and young.

will find it difficult to get a purchase to raid hatchlings. The smaller birds will, I hope, find them secure nesting sites. They are, obviously, a compromise to an open situation, but with luck the birds will view the roof as a deep cover tree canopy.

Birds have been observed to nest in all manner of weird and wonderful places. In the USA birds have been reported as nesting quite happily in a two-litre plastic milk carton with a small hole cut in. These units could

provide security for birds of a variety of sizes. In any case they will, undoubtedly, work as bird feeders and fruit fly deterrents. *Do not feed birds regularly, it makes them dependent and is bad for their health.*

The boxes are very simple to make. The main tools required are tin snips, power drill, 2 G-clamps, a hammer and vice. Zincalume sheeting doesn't need painting and will see service for decades.

Obviously, the units, being made of metal, would need to be located within

good tree cover. In an open situation they would get too hot as a nesting site. Whether for fruit fly deterrents, feeding platforms or possible nesting sites, they would make an ideal project for sheltered workshops.

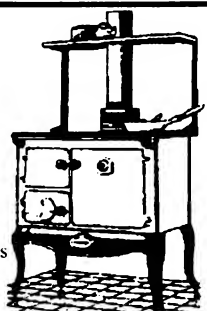
A wildlife society in my area has trialed the shelters and, so far, has reported only grey shrike thrushes nesting in them. It's worth experimenting with dimensions and locations. If you try them, please let us all know of any successes. ♀

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HOT WATER SYSTEM MAINTENANCE

by Larry Casper, Strathalbyn, SA.

Articles in GR often elicit responses from formally trained operators or field workers. We appreciate their input and diplomatic ways of reminding readers of the need to consider all options before DIY, including safety and long-term economic issues. Larry Casper has generously offered his viewpoint and expertise on hot water systems.

I read with interest Roberino's article on mains pressure hot water units in GR146. I am afraid I could not help but put finger to keyboard and put forth my views on his advice.

First, the National Plumbing Code AS3500, which, as the title suggests, covers the whole of Australia (with some amendments in some states), prohibits anyone other than a licensed plumber from working on a hot water unit in the manner suggested. A mains pressure hot water unit is a pressure vessel and can cause injury or even death if modified in an incorrect manner.

Second, the bung that Roberino mentions one should remove is actually all that is left of the sacrificial anode installed in the cylinder by the manufacturer to prevent corrosion of the steel inner tank caused by electrolysis, the passing of a small electrical current between the outer cylinder (cathode) and the anode. When the anode has been eaten away by this current, and this is its function, the corrosion then starts on the cylinder itself. This electrical current is present in all steel hot water units, not just those running on electricity. This includes gas-heated units.

To make sure that your mains pressure type hot water unit lasts longer, the wise course of action is to periodically have a plumber check the condition of the anode in the top of the unit. For those who insist on doing their own unlicensed work, pull the anode out about 15 centimetres and observe the condition of that section. Roberino is right in saying that the top of the cylinder is where most corrosion takes place, and again is right about it being caused by air in the water. Also, the top is where the water is hottest. With this in mind, if the top 100 millimetres of the anode is corroded back to the mild steel wire core, the anode should be replaced

to maintain your corrosion protection.

This is where your *knowledgeable* plumber comes into his own. There are a lot of plumbers in this wide brown land who do not understand the technology of the anodes, or would rather just sell you a new unit, and consequently are not equipped or not prepared to specify which metal compound (and there are three different ones on the market) should go back in.

The metal compound used depends on the range of the TDS in your water. TDS stands for Total Dissolved Solids. This is not mud, for mud is not dissolved. It is in effect the mineral content of your water. Your local water authority should be able to tell you what your TDS level is, or, failing that, send a water sample to the authority in your capital city. I myself carry out quite a bit of this type of work and carry my own test gear on my truck.

Your anode should be checked at least every three years, and, if you have a standard anode, which the manufacturer installs at the factory, and you are on mains water, chances are that the one installed is correct and will last two and a half to three years. If you are on rainwater, the standard anode will develop a brown coating after a short time and will be sealed by this brown muck, thereby rendering your anode ineffective in protecting your unit. It is useless to try to clean the anode because the coating impregnates the pores of the metal. The cure is to specify the correct metal compound for your water. I am happy to advise, free of charge, any Grassrooters who would like to email me on: casplum@backflowsolutions.com.au

I may be able to help also by supplying the name of your local Ano-Guard distributor. I have no financial interest in Ano-Guard, by the way. I am just another plumber who uses their products, but I would be able to obtain the information

for you on your local supplier. I am also able to email you a brochure if you would like to know more about the function of anodes. If you do not have email facilities and would like info anyway, send me a stamped self-addressed envelope, business size, and I'll send you out the same info. At last, my 30 years of plumbing experience may be of some assistance to Grassrooters.

Following the above advice will ensure longer life for your mains pressure type steel hot water unit than will putting a drain valve at the top. ☺



FRIDGE EFFICIENCY



Most of us have our fridges located in the kitchen, this is usually a part of the house that receives quite a bit of direct sunlight. Although this is convenient, it makes more sense to place the fridge in a cooler part of the house that receives less direct sun. Also, make sure the size of your fridge meets your needs – it is a waste of energy to have a huge fridge that is empty most of the time. ☺



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A Bed For Every Body

by Janos Paskandy, Mirrabooka, Qld.

Beds are readily available in many standard sizes with many different degrees of firmness in the base. Still, no manufacturer can possibly cater for all the many different sizes of rooms, growing children, or heights and weights of adults. Having a bed made to measure can require funds out of proportion to the pleasure of owning one. Custom making a bed can be a delight to the home handyperson.

Following the measurements below will result in a standard size bed. By simply adding and taking away from the lengths any size bed can be made.

There are two ways to make the base harder or softer:

- By drilling only the same size holes (step 12) into the battening (that acts as springs) as the dowels that position them, the movement of the battening is restricted and there is no spring action. By cutting ovals into the battening, it can perform as a leaf spring, with the length of the oval restricting the end position.

- By using 18 – 20 mm battening, the base will be hard for even a heavy person. Making the battening thinner than 15 mm (and allowing spring action by allowing the positioning pins to move in ovals) will result in a softer base.

There are further advantages in this spring system. Sooner or later every spring system breaks or stretches and needs replacement. When this wooden spring system sags, the spring leaves can be turned over again and again. Should breakage occur, there is usually only one spring leaf to be replaced, keeping maintenance costs to the absolute minimum.

MATERIALS FOR A SINGLE BED

- 35 x 70 mm for bed heads and spring base, can be pine or jarrah:
 - 4 x 700 mm (a), (al)
 - 2 x 920 mm (b)
 - 2 x 925 mm (c)
 - 4 x 120 mm (d)
- 25 x 140 mm planks, can be pine or jarrah:



- 2 x 920 mm (e)
- 2 x 1950 mm (f)
- 25 x 210 mm planks, can be pine or jarrah:
 - 1 x 1950 mm (g)
 - 1 x 195 mm (h)
 - 1 x 1010 mm (i)
- 15 x 65 mm battening, must be knotless timber like nyatoh:
 - 7 x 1800 mm
 - 630 mm 5/8" dowel
 - 8 x 50 – 60 mm wood screws (if the joints are not perfect and you use screws to strengthen them more screws will be needed)
 - filler
 - wood glue
 - sanding sealer
 - clear wood finish

MAKING YOUR BED

1) Cut (a), (al) and (b) to size, sand the pieces as smooth as you wish to have the finished product and mark out the grooves and pegs as illustrated on drawing 1 and 1/a.

2) Cut (e) to size, sand it to finished

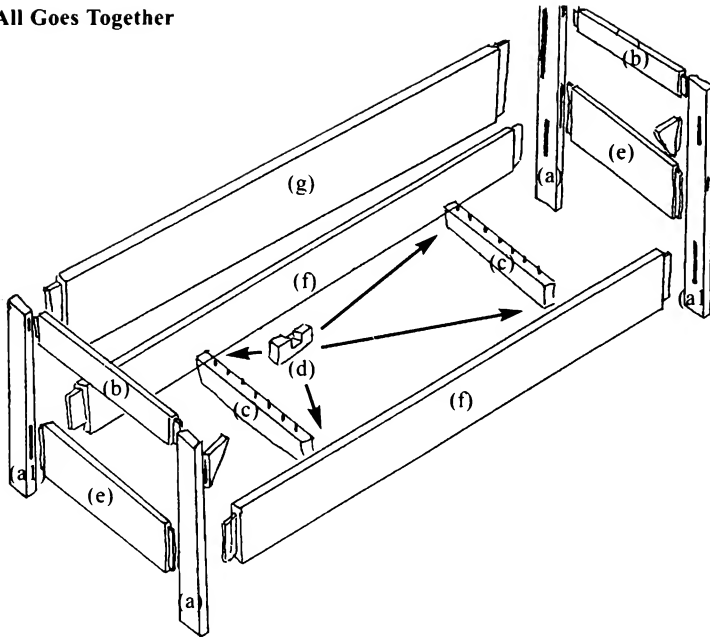
quality and mark both ends as illustrated on drawing 11.

3) Prepare the marked joints 25 mm deep with a trimmer. If you haven't got one, you can most likely hire one from the nearest tool hire service.

4) Assemble the bed heads with (a), (al), (b) and (e). Before joining the pieces permanently with glue, fit them together to test. If the fit is too tight, sand them back to get a comfortable but not loose fit. You can use any wood glue for the assembly. If the joints are loose, you have to use a wood glue that gives a strong bond in loose joints. In this case you might wish to use 50 mm and 30 mm wood screws or chipboard screws to ensure a strong joint. Two per joint should be sufficient. Drive the screws in 2 – 4 mm below the surface so the heads can be covered up later with wood filler.

If you prepared the joint precisely, everything will be square. If your joints are not perfect and you use screws, you might have to test the corners and keep them square before securing the joints

How It All Goes Together



with screws. Allow sufficient time for the glue to dry.

5) Cut (f) and (g) to size, sand them smooth and prepare the ends as illustrated on drawing II.

6) Prepare the ends of your 210 x 195 mm (h) piece as shadowed on

illustration III and detailed on illustration II. Cut it along the A – B line as shown on illustration III. Sand the pieces to the required finish.

7) When the glue in the bed heads is perfectly dry, test the remaining joints as in step 4. If no one is available to

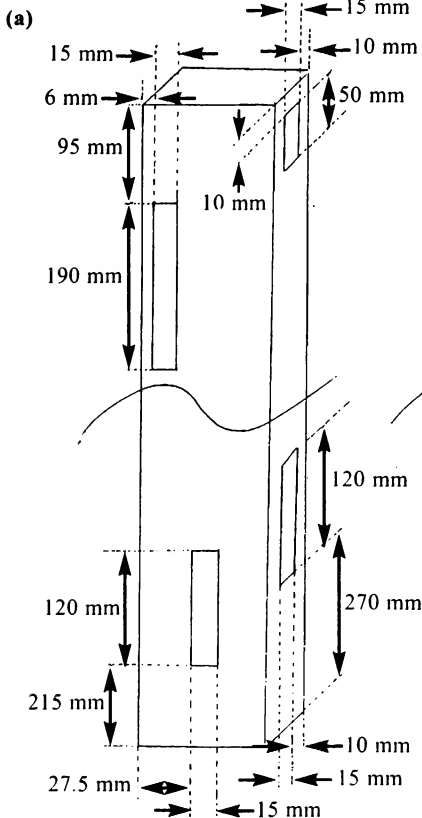
help you, place all pieces on to the ground touching each other and use octopus straps to hold them all together. Once assembled, the flexibility of the octopus straps will allow you to take the ends out of joint one by one and glue them in place. Again, if the joints are not perfect and you are using screws, make sure everything is square before driving the screws in.

Remember to drive them in deep enough so they can be hidden later by wood filler. If you haven't used screws, tighten the octopus straps or tie the bed together with a rope and allow the glue to dry. Glue the triangular pieces with their wide end upward into the bed heads. They will hold a little table at the foot end and can be used to attach a reading lamp to at the head end.

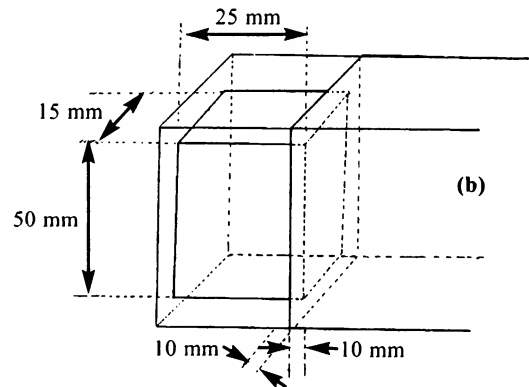
8) Before cutting (c) to size, check the distance between the two side panels of the bed. It should be 925 mm. Cut the two (c) pieces to the size of the distance. Cut the four (d) pieces and mark them as illustrated on drawing IV, and remove the marked area.

9) Divide the inside length of the bed by four. Mark a quarter of the bed length measured from the bed head

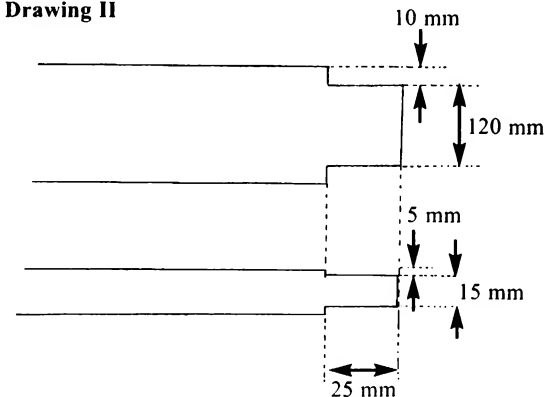
Drawing I



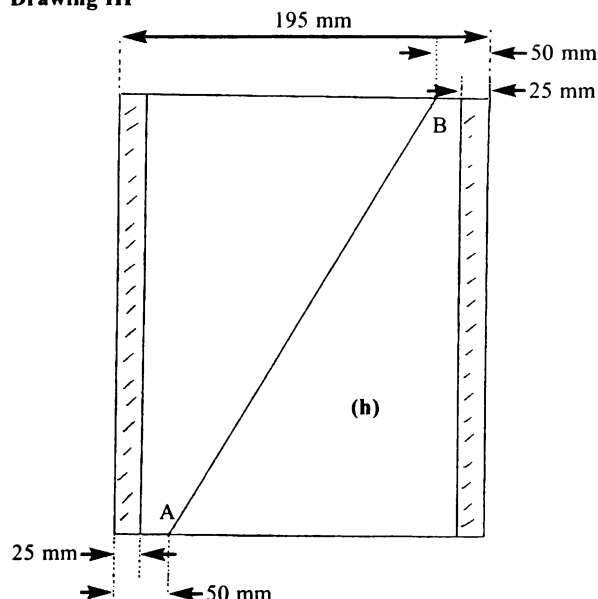
Drawing I/a



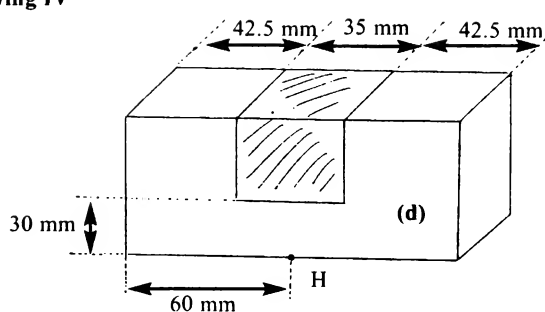
Drawing II



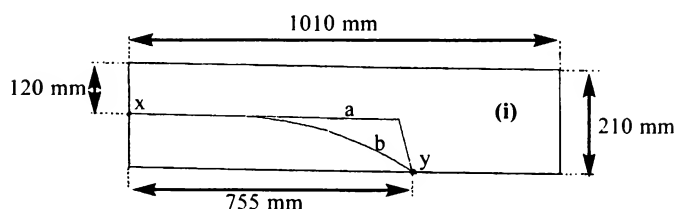
Drawing III



Drawing IV



Drawing V



joint on the bottom inner edge of the side panel. (This will be covered by the spot marked H on illustration IV.) Do the same starting from the other three corners. Glue the (d) pieces into position with spot H covering the quarter marks (the bottom of (d) pieces are level with the bottom edge of the side panel) and secure them with the screws and allow the glue to dry.

10) Mark the centre of the 35 mm wide surface on the four (c) pieces and mark the following spots on the centre line starting from one end at: 63 mm, 196 mm, 329 mm, 462 mm, 595 mm, 728 mm, 861 mm. Drill holes the same size as the dowel, 30 mm deep at each marked spot. Each (c) piece will have seven holes.

11) Cut the dowel into 14 x 45 mm pieces, slightly round off one end and glue the unrounded ends down into the 14 holes of the two (c) pieces.

12) Cut your battening to size, place the (c) pieces into position (into the grooves of the (d) pieces), position one across the (c) pieces so that both ends have an equal size gap between them and the bed head. Mark the centre of the dowel pins on the battening. Now you are ready to start engineering the springs. It is best tested with the mattress on. If you are not making a standard size bed, it is advisable to wait until the mattress manufacturer delivers your custom-

made mattress. Your local furniture store can advise you on the nearest mattress factory.

While engineering your own spring leaves, please keep in mind the points made about how to make the base harder or softer (third paragraph).

13) Cut your (i) piece to size and mark it as illustrated on drawing V. You can use any other pattern between X and Y points besides the a or b pattern shown. Place the (i) piece against one bed head with the narrow end resting on the triangular piece and mark the edges of the triangular piece and the bedside plank on the bottom of the (i) piece. Make a 4 mm deep groove between the pencil lines, so your little table cannot slide sideways.

Rotate the (i) piece and position it against the other bed head the same

way, so that the narrow end rests on the triangular piece (the grooves will face the ceiling). Mark it and make the grooves on the opposite side. This way the little table can be safely used at either end of the bed.

14) Fill in all cracks, screw holes and other possible surface imperfections with wood filler, sand the surfaces to finish, apply sanding sealer, sand back slightly when dry, apply a second coat and sand it slightly. By this stage the surfaces should be as smooth as glass. Apply two thin coats of wood finish; (c) pieces and battening are best left raw. If your bed gets a little noisy at times, applying candle wax onto the (c) pieces around the dowel pins and onto the battening, where it is in touch with the (c) pieces, will silence it. ☺

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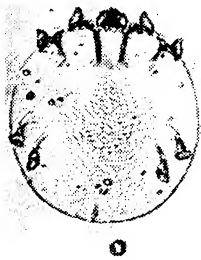
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Scaly Leg Mite In Poultry

by Megg Miller, Nagambie, Vic.

When we discussed poultry mites last issue – the red, northern and tropical fowl mites – space precluded adding in the fourth pest in the group, the scaly leg mite. It is another minute ectoparasite that cannot be seen by the human eye, but its presence is easily confirmed by the disfiguring encrustation it causes on infected birds' legs and feet.

The scaly leg mite, *Cnemidocoptes mutans*, infects fowls, turkeys, pheasants, guineas and caged birds, rarely establishing itself on waterfowl because of the latter's fondness for aquatic activities. This parasite is easily transmitted, passed on from the close proximity of birds roosting together at night or from an infected hen to her chicks during brooding. In addition, the mite can adhere to discarded scales and encrusted matter and so could be present in show cages if inadequately cleaned after use, or in crates used to transport birds when litter isn't removed and replaced after use. Fortunately, survival of mites off the host doesn't exceed four weeks. Scrupulous hygiene should be practised during that period if there is a risk of infection occurring.



Greatly magnified scaly leg mite.

HOW THE MITE OPERATES

These mites generally start off burrowing into the skin between the toes or folds in the soles of the feet, the females depositing their eggs under the skin. The area quickly becomes irritated, blisters forming under the scales and bursting, producing a straw coloured serum. This dries to form a grey chalk-like deposit. Continued irritation by the mites' presence keeps exudate forming. Over time this thick-

ens, forcing toe and leg scales to detach from the skin. The mites develop a honeycomb of tunnels in the dried exudate and move freely through it.

The legs and feet of infected birds become thickened and display a rough, grey, dried appearance. The bird suffers discomfort and occasionally infection occurs, leading to tenderness and lameness. With appropriate treatment the mites can be killed and the unsightly encrustation softened so it falls off and allows scales to return. They will not be as smooth and close fitting as before the infestation.

TRANSMISSION

Scaly leg mite is highly infectious to avian species but slow to multiply and cause damage. By the time a bird has thickly encrusted toes and legs you can be sure the mites have been in situ for many months. They are generally transferred during the night when birds perch closely together, or are picked up from the litter in the hen house. Broody hens with this parasite infect their chicks through the littlies' close presence to legs and feet.

MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL

For complete elimination the entire flock must be treated even if not all members appear affected. Scrupulous hygiene in the hen house must also be practised.

There isn't an instant cure but there are several quick chemical-based ones. Not everyone wants to use chemicals so time will be the component that wins or loses the battle for those using slower acting measures – time allocated for catching and inspecting the flock, and then for regular treatment and prevention measures.

A number of commercial preparations are marketed that contain malathion, carbaryl or other miticides. These are diluted with water and sprayed on perches and litter and also the infected legs and feet. Few GR readers will want to use these. Another alternative is use of a systematic



The scales detach because of exudate resulting from irritation from the mites.

inhibitor like Ivomec. The constituents permeate the skin and blood, making these distasteful to biting insects. A couple of drops are placed on the skin, but remember, this hasn't been formulated for poultry so there isn't a recommended dosage nor withdrawal period between application and eating eggs or despatched birds.

Sump oil is an old treatment that was cheap and easy to obtain. The birds' legs were painted with this mixture along with perches. It's messy and likely to stain eggshells and has lost popularity because of concern over the chemical wastes it may contain.

Some people use – and swear by – WD40, likening it to diesel. They spray it onto legs once or twice and it does work in mild infections. It's not dissimilar to a mixture of kerosene and oil, this latter being brushed on with a toothbrush. If you're a purist,

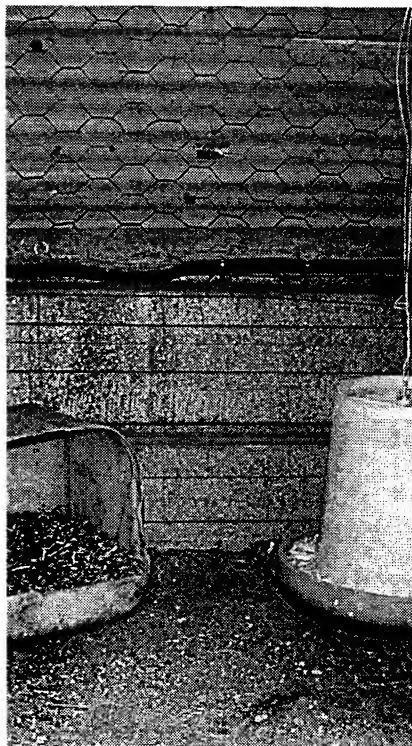
other remedies will be more appropriate. To use kero and oil, mix one teaspoon of the kero with half a cup of cooking oil (old recipes mention linseed but this isn't necessary). You may make it stronger, but kero will sting and cause birds discomfort if too strong.

Both Vicks chest rub and eucalyptus oil (diluted in cooking oil) are suggested remedies in some books. I've tested Vicks on a bird – on one leg only – and it caused the rooster great distress when in direct sunlight. There are other remedies far more bird friendly that could be used instead of either of these.

Sulphur powder mixed to a paste and brushed on is a good alternative. Vaseline is usually suggested as the carrier, but in the past lard was used. A modern alternative is sorbolene cream. Use one teaspoon sulphur to one tablespoon of carrier. A greasy carrier like Vaseline is better than an oil as it clings to the legs longer. The idea is not only to smother the mites, but also to soften the encrustation so it crumbles away. The sulphur, of course, like kerosene, eucalyptus oil etc, kills the mites.

You may add an essential oil to cooking oil – both thyme and pennyroyal have insecticidal properties, and a couple of drops to half a cup of the cooking oil should be sufficient. Another oil worth considering is tea tree, a couple of drops also being all that would be needed in the half cup of cooking oil.

There are other mixtures and treatments, but the above mentioned are the most commonly used. The only other one worth considering is the regular application of cooking oil on its own. The process could be made easier if birds used a pop hole to go in and out of the house. A baking dish or similar



Be prepared to brush walls and perches and clean out nests to eliminate scaly leg mites.

sized container is placed at the pop hole, inside so it is protected from the weather. It is filled with sawdust or rice hulls which in turn are saturated with cooking oil. The fowls' legs are oiled each time they enter or exit the shed. To prevent overturning, the container may be secured with tent pegs.

Hen House Hygiene

After treatment it is essential the perch is brushed clean and liberally coated with a safe insecticidal mix and that floor litter is raked up and removed. These two actions reduce reinfection considerably. A light sprinkling of sulphur can be applied to house or pen floor before new litter is added.

Frequency of Treatment

How often should birds be treated? If scaly leg is just starting to develop it can be controlled with a fortnightly soapy scrub and application of oil, but if the infection is bad the more frequently the birds are treated the quicker you eliminate it. Every three to four days is ideal if you can manage it, otherwise weekly will suffice.

Need for Regular Care

If these suggestions sound like a lot of work, consider if you really want to keep poultry. All livestock are labour intensive and the secret is to keep an eye out for potential problems and nip them in the bud. This applies equally to poultry and their ectoparasites. A final word of advice. Fowls with feathered legs seem the most severely affected by the scaly leg mites, perhaps because they can become well established before their presence is detectable. If you have Silkies, Pekins, Langshan, Faverolles or feather-legged crossbreds, constant vigilance will be required. ♣



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The handbook is 200 pages with colour and black and white photos. Cost is \$39.95 plus \$7.50 P&H from the Secretary, Wyandotte Club of Australia Inc, 14 Howard St, Parkes 2870. ♣



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Let The Girls Do The Work!

by Wendy Bartlett, Nairne, SA.

Do you use pea straw or some sort of hay to mulch your garden beds? Are you sick of small pea seedlings or other weeds germinating in garden areas? Do you have chooks? If you have answered 'yes' to all three of these questions, then I have a great idea you might wish to try.

Mulching your garden doesn't necessarily take that long and can be a good form of exercise at the same time. However, when you consider the time and energy spent carting bales of straw around or heaving wheelbarrows of compost, you have to admit that it can be hard work and you might wish to spend that valuable time doing something else.

I threw a bale of pea straw in my chook yard, with the intention of giving my six girls something interesting to do for a day, because I don't let them out into the garden as much as I used to. They make too much mess! By the end of the day they had completely ripped the entire bale into tiny pieces and they had a great time doing it. I thought to myself, Hey, I can scrape this up and use it to mulch the garden, and they've made it easy for me because they've shredded it up already.



Forget about struggling with bale twine and inhaling dust and mould spores, just put the bale in the poultry pen and let your busy flock do the rest.

Sometimes laying the straw around can be annoying. If you suffer from hay fever, asthma or other allergies, the dust can set you off. I don't suffer from any form of allergy, but, even with a mask on, I occasionally sneeze and get itchy eyes. By allowing the chooks to do the work for you, it takes away any risk of having an attack.

I usually leave the bale, or what's left of it, in their pen for a couple of weeks. After this time I scoop it up into my wheelbarrow, along with any chook manure from their sleeping area, and distribute it around my garden. The result is a beautiful mix of straw, chicken manure and any other shred-

ded green material that they haven't eaten, but have ripped to shreds. It makes a cheap and manageable mulch with no weed seeds, no creepy crawlies and no bulky chunks that can form a barrier to rainfall or watering regimes.

Next time you are thinking that it's time to mulch the garden, why not let your chooks do all of the work for you? It makes your chores just a little bit easier and much more enjoyable. 🐔

◆ ◆

KEEP ANIMALS?

You need a *Grass Roots* publication.
See page 82 for details. 🌿

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Our Slice Of Heaven

by John & Janice Melville, Mukinbudin, WA.

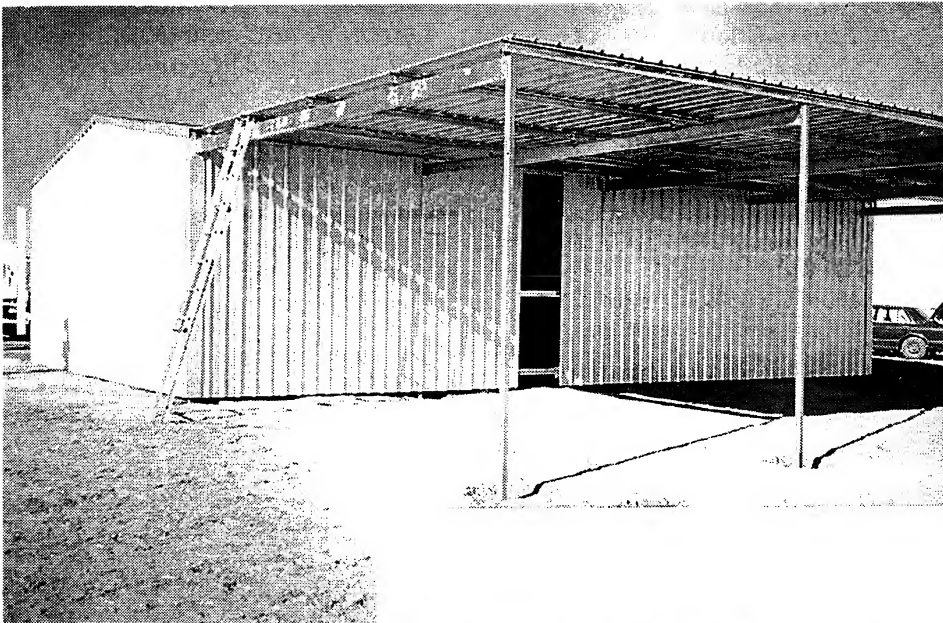
Well, it's been eight years, doesn't seem that long really. Janice had just given birth to twin boys when we moved onto our slice of heaven. It was a bare 600-acre externally fenced 'well farmed' block about 20 kilometres from Mukinbudin in Western Australia.

Janice was welcomed from the hospital by a bare Zincalume Trimdeck shed that a few friends had just put up. John had concreted all floors with a barrow and petrol mixer. We had a small generator for limited power. John's mum and dad bought in with us and they were building a house at the same time. We dismantled four houses and one shed for materials. The parents have almost completed their house, spending bulk time and little money on it.

We have four boys now, Ben 12, Sam 10, and Tom and Luke 8 years. They work hard, play rough, and, with their



Above: John and Janice with their boys Ben, Sam, Tom and Luke and dog Tony, loving life in their slice of heaven.



Left: The Zincalume Trimdeck shed was the family's first home on their 600-acre property, a challenge with two new-born babies to care for as well as two active older boys.

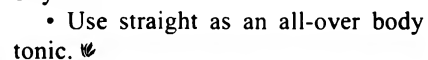
Below: The home is nearing completion, the changing needs of a growing family are being met by having a flexible floor plan.



Our farm was a hell-hole when we first moved here, 350 kilometres from the coast, 250 millimetres rainfall per year, hot as hades in summer and icy cold in winter. It can be done. We have never lost sight of our goal to grow anything and everything. Now we have our slice of heaven and we love it. 🌻

Put a cup of rolled oats in the end of a stocking. Hold it under running bath water. This is an excellent way to soothe sensitive or allergy-affected skin. The oat-filled stocking can be used several times. ♡

Place the lemon grass and water in a pan and simmer for ten minutes. Strain,



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Calf Pen and Cow Yard

by EL McLean, Murgon, Qld.

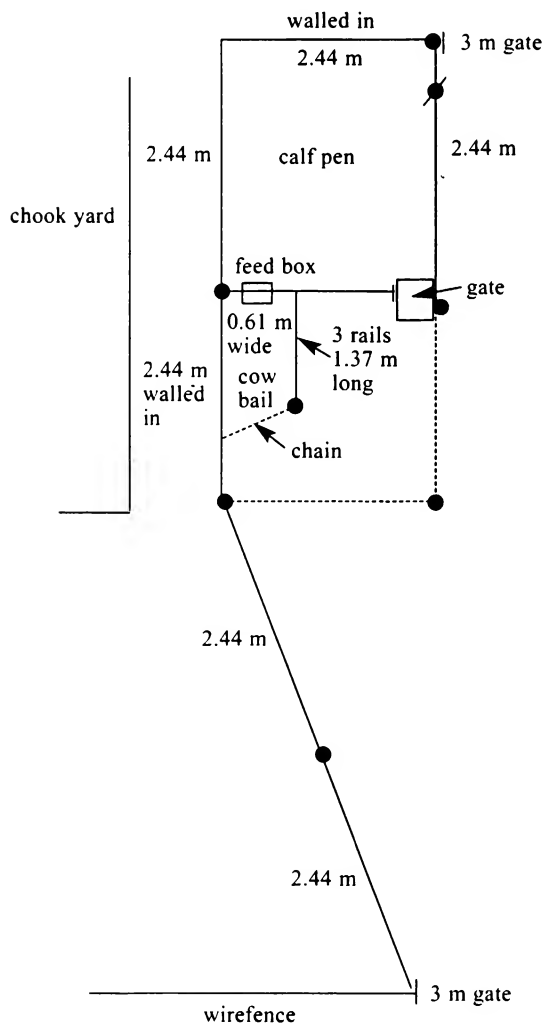
If you don't have existing yards on your land, it's difficult working out what goes best where, especially if livestock are a new project. This is a rough plan of the cattle yard I have here on our 40 acres. The cow bail and calf pen are roofed over and walled in on the prevailing weather sides. The roof is 2 metres on the low side and 2.1 metres on the high

side. Gutting and a small tank provide water for washing the cow's udder and your own hands. I have a water trough under the fence in the yard and the cow comes in to the yard for water. The calf pen being in front of the bail encourages a young cow to come into the bail because the calf can be seen through the bail. The feed box is in front of the bail at

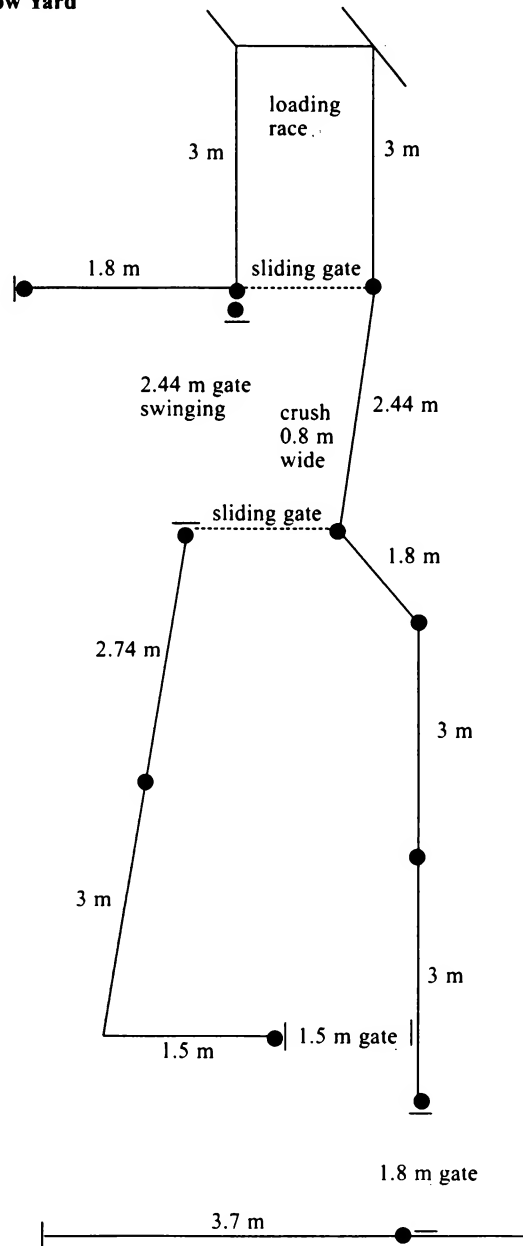
a comfortable height. A piece of chain across the cow's behind will hold the cow in a comfortable position with a leg rope for milking. I have a 3-metre gate on either side of the plan because I use my yard to take my truck through to the other parts of the farm and to access one of the dams for fire trucks. I make a fire-break around all buildings on the farm. ♣

Calf Pen

posts 0.61 m in ground & 1.52 m above ground
3 rails 0.5 m apart
top rail on top of posts

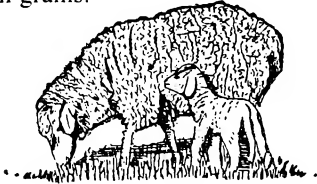


Cow Yard



How Much Fleece?

Spinners often need to know how much raw fleece and spun wool is required for jumpers and cardigans. Please note that the weights quoted for fleece are based on well-skirted fleeces in the medium range, extra should be allowed for stronger wools. Always allow extra when in doubt. All weights are in grams.



Reprinted from the December 2000 issue of *Treadles*, the newsletter of the Victorian Handweavers & Spinners Guild Inc. For information about the Guild and its activities write to: 12 – 20 Shakespeare St, Carlton North 3054. Ph: 03-9347-3008. ♪

Chest Measures	Approximately 8 Ply		Approximately 12 Ply	
Centimetres	Fleece	Spun	Fleece	Spun
40.5	490	320	650	420
45.5	550	360	740	480
51	615	400	815	530
56	680	440	890	580
61	740	480	980	640
66	800	520	1060	690
71	860	560	1140	740
76.5	920	600	1230	800
81.5	980	640	1310	850
86.5	1050	680	1385	900
91.5	1110	720	1460	950
96.5	1170	760	1555	1010
101.5	1230	800	1630	1060
107	1290	840	1710	1110
112	1350	880	1800	1170
117	1415	920	1880	1220
122	1480	960	1955	1270
127	1540	1000	2050	1330

FLEECY HINTS

Using raw fleece and spun wool is great fun. It must be treated differently to commercially processed wool. Here are some tips and ideas that might help minimise any nasty surprises.

Unwashed Fleece

Never use unwashed fleece or yarn for a wall hanging or tapestry. Not only will unwashed fleece badly stain the wall, but the moths will have ruined your beautiful artwork in no time.

To Soften Fleece

Fleece that has become dry can be laid out in the sun and sprayed lightly with hot water from a spray bottle. Leave in the sun for an hour or so and turn occasionally.

Stain Removals From Wool

The most important point to successful stain removal from wool is speed. If left, the stain can get into the fibres. The application of heat or hard rubbing can make some stains worse.

Adapting Patterns for Spun Wool

If you are using a commercial pattern and adapting it for use with handspun wool, it is a good idea to keep a note of needle sizes and the numbers of stitches used and even tape a sample of the



wool to the pattern. Record your observations about the results because these can prove invaluable for future reference.

Alternatively, try knitting a test square from your handspun wool. Cast on 20 stitches and knit 5 centimetres. You could even try doing more than one square with different sized needles.

Wash the squares, check their size, note needle size etc. From this you can work out the tension and find a commercial pattern with the same number of stitches to 2.5 centimetres. Regardless of needle and wool sizes referred to in the pattern, remember to use the same needle size that produced the tension that suited you. ♪

Tagasaste During Drought

by Charlie Schroeder, Cassilis, Vic.

Planning ahead by incorporating tagasaste plantings in the farm plan can really pay off when the inevitable droughts occur.

I believe it was Cato who wrote about the master of a family, who must have in his rustic villa 'an oil and wine cellar, many casks, so that it may be pleasant to expect hard times; it will be for his advantage and virtue, and glory'. This is the way that I think of tagasaste. It is my store, so that it may be pleasant to expect hard times. Though it was purely theory in the drought of '82/'83, as there were only small trees in the ground, and insufficient to feed anything at all during those difficult months. The '98 drought tested the theory and we actually experienced the reality.

We planted tagasaste for a multitude of reasons: for animal feed, to create hedgerows along the fencelines, to stop the animals from contact with neigh-

bours' stock, to hopefully annul any future need for replacing the fences, as windbreaks, as shade and shelter areas, nutrient soaks, for soil penetration, young fruit tree protection and as no-dig keyline contours. By the time many trees had matured and the greater plantings meant more material, the versatility of the plant proved to be endless, and it was also used as mulch, bedding and food material for the worm farms, and litter for the poultry.

In dry periods of years past, the tagasaste trees were cut drastically, but in the '98 event, the trees were cut unmercifully. It was necessary to do this because the time had come to see what could be achieved, then to look at what would happen after the drought. So considerable experimentation was used,

cutting both hedgerows and free-standing trees. There were also trees in excess of 16 years old that needed to be removed, their main productive life long over, and their only real value being their ability to produce limited seed.

Because of the extremely cold winters that our area endures, sometimes frosts to minus 10 degrees, and usually a couple of snowfalls, there is little, if any, pasture growth after June and before August. Tagasaste is required to fill the feed gap during this time of year as well as during the summer months. In the '98 drought it was all the feed that was available to the sheep during winter, after four poor years. The drought came off a dry winter and didn't give this area a break till early June when a decent rain fell.



An overview of Charlie Schroeder's property where tagasaste plantings have proven their versatility and usefulness.

A few light showers during the drought kept the trees going, they took in the little moisture through the leaves. We had seen during previous extended dry periods that tagasaste will retain its leaves even if there is only morning dew and the days are not too hot. Without doubt, on the north-facing slopes, during long hot dry months without rain, the trees will jet-tison their leaves. The sheep will vacuum them from the ground, and then munch from the cut branches, but will find it difficult to strip the bark, as it tightens on the wood. The management of stock to maximise returns from tagasaste and to prevent soil erosion in fragile areas is a concept that requires more attention.

The trees and branches that are cut are turned at the end of the day, or the next day, so that the sheep can access the bark that was closest to the ground. In this way most of the nutrient the tree supplies is utilised by the animals. The trees that happened to be in areas where the soil contained more moisture, retained by either humus or other organic matter, were cut differently. They were cut back hard, but a few longer branches were allowed to remain. With the light showers, the trees thus pruned had a chance to put out shoots on the lower limbs, and then the branches that were left at the first cut were removed and fed to the animals. They had served their purpose of pulling the sap up into the top of the tree and allowing it to coppice.

Tagasaste will coppice at any rate if some one-year-old bark is left, either on the trunk or the limbs of the tree. Sometimes the older bark will put out shoots, but it takes a long time for the shoots to grow to any size.



Cut tagasaste branches ready for the sheep to eat. Electric fences protect the hedgerows from unwanted incursions.

Much is dependent on the age of the tree, its location and the stresses it is going through.

In our operation some trees, on a rotational basis, are not cut for either feed or other uses, but are allowed to grow for seed production. These tend to grow rampant and, after the collection of this valuable resource and money earner, they are cut back hard, so that they once more revert to growing the foliage which is the main material for forage. Few seed pods were harvested during the '98 drought, and only trees that managed to grow seed while still being cut for fodder had their seeds harvested.

In a normal winter, there are pods from which the seeds have been removed, these being fed to the sheep during the colder months. The '98 drought caused them to be fed earlier, so they were not available during that winter as a supplementary feed.

The older hedgerows that were cut out entirely left a seed bank in the soil to germinate an entire new generation after the drought. When we collect seed, we always leave enough for regeneration. The current germination of seed is crowded, and some will perish by nature's inclination. Those that survive will be too confined for good management, and will need to be thinned by hand. However, that is very pleasant work, as it is done at a time when sheep can be fed so nothing is wasted.

One of the greatest challenges is

that of trying to match the number of animals to the feed available. A judgement must be made about the time that the rain will come and when the feed will be in the paddock once again. Animals need to be removed so that numbers will match feed available once it regrows, after rain has arrived.

It will be interesting to see how the rumen of the sheep will react to only feeding on tagasaste. In the past dry periods, though our sheep have not managed to put on any weight they have survived and held the integrity of their wool. Ours being wool sheep, this is of great concern.

The tagasaste system we use, though not complete, as half the property has not yet been developed, was primarily developed as a supplementary and drought feed accumulation. The '98 drought was a valuable chance to learn, but it was only the first step in trying to understand how to manage dry periods with limited stress on people and the animals that rely on them. Fortunately, in that drought, no feed had to be bought.

There will be close observation for years to come to see how the systems so far in place will endure. One thing is absolute – more tagasaste must be in the ground ready for the next drought that is sure to arrive.

Next time, I'll describe the survival and management of tagasaste in the post-drought period. ☘

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ANIMAL ANECDOTES

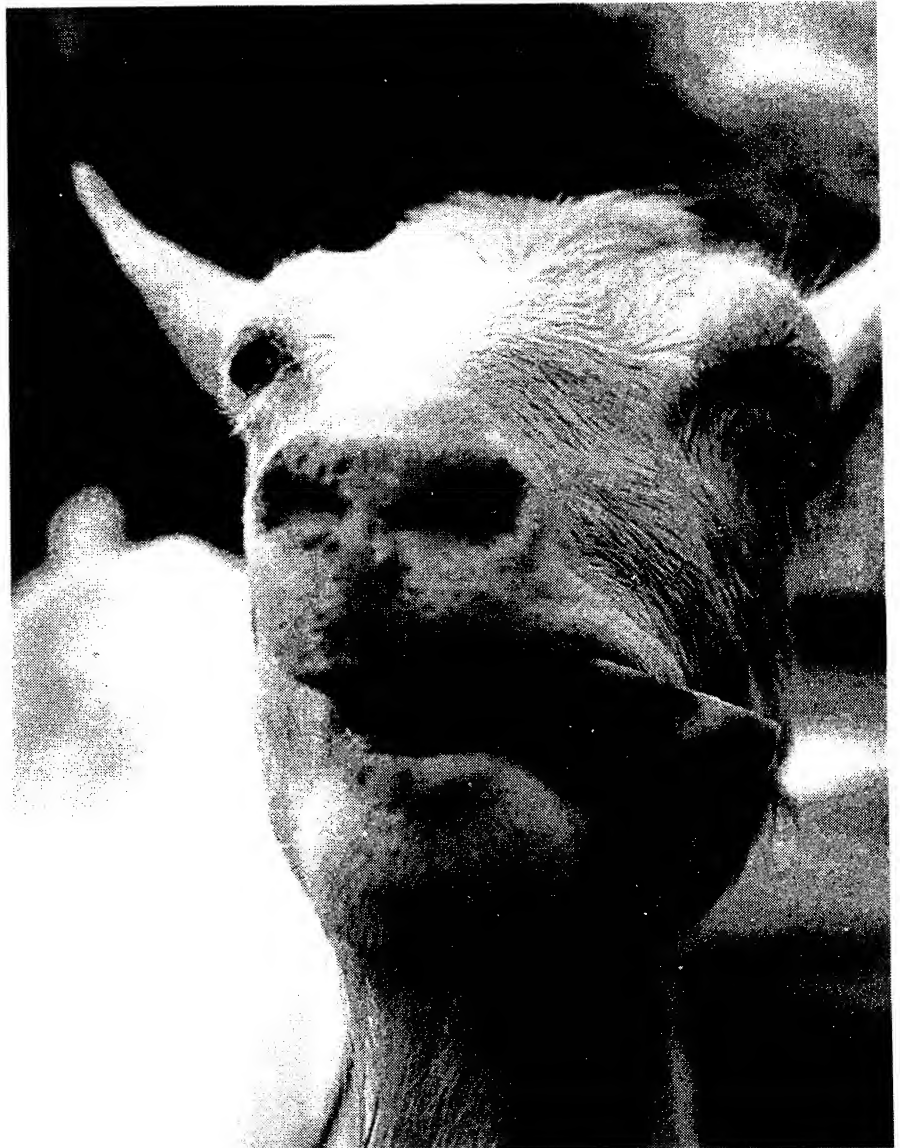
by Alma Embacher, Tweed Heads, NSW.

Anyone who keeps animals soon acquires a stock of stories about their amusing, and annoying, antics. We know you'll enjoy these tales about Jessie the roguish goat and other animals on Alma Embacher's farm near Tweed Heads.

For a number of years I have intended to send in stories about our darling goat Jessica. We got her when she was six weeks old and bottle fed her, and did she love her bottle! Well, the stories we could tell of her antics, and ours, would fill a book! For instance, the day we could see something was wrong. Karl saw her make a beeline for her stable in the middle of the day. On investigation, it was clear that she wasn't pleased with our efforts to get close enough to find out what had happened. Karl saw her in the darkest corner, looking at him with big eyes. He thought he'd leave her for awhile and look a bit later. Walking away, he noticed the lid of the beehive was shifted halfway across the box! So, putting two and two together – she'd given herself away! She'd probably seen Karl working on or checking the hives from time to time, and must have thought, 'I can do that, I like a bit of honey.' But she came to a sticky end! We laughed so much when it was over, and she was fine in a couple of hours.

She was a wonderful goat, provided us with beautiful milk for many years, from which we made cheese, yoghurt, cottage cheese, and a luscious salty Greek-style of cheese. Our son, Mark, always called the cheese 'Cantankerous' brand! She did have her off days, I must concede.

There were nine sheep, one of which was the boss, but not to Jessie – no – she had everyone bluffed, even Woolly, who thought she was the leader. They all had about three acres to roam in, but Jessica definitely preferred the vegie garden! Often, when working in the garden, Karl tethered her to a stake, and she enjoyed that. But honestly, her neck seemed to grow another 30 centimetres



when she was almost close enough to have a nibble at the comfrey, or silver-beet, or parsley; in fact she loved everything in the garden.

Then there was Nero, the ram – the ram with horns! After trying to give him his first lesson on 'who is boss around here', she decided that his horns

and her udder were a dangerous combination, so she left him alone then.

'I hope Jessie is not around, that gate near the caravan is open.' 'Oh no, I saw her right up the back paddock just five minutes ago.' Out of the corner of my eye, I noticed movement of branches in the orchard. Oh no, there she was, just out of sight from the kitchen, pruning – in her own inimitable fashion – the apple tree, or the pear, or nectarine. She didn't mind which, she loved them all! She kept us on our toes, and would do anything for an apple, which was our sure way of luring her out of the orchard. I think she had a built-in 'gate's open' radar. She could smell it, I'm sure, from the back paddock!

Honestly, pages could be filled with stories about Jessica. Indeed, our animals were all special, including Bill, the

cat, who would come in the stable at milking time and sit and wait for his milk, as the chooks strutted and scratched around – it was all in together. The chooks loved the warm milk also, especially Lily, who was often seen sitting on Jessie's back, while she enjoyed her hay (Jessica not the chook!).

I must tell you about the cocky. Within one week of us acquiring Jessica, a sulphur-crested cocky was seen strutting along the edge of the studio roof. Karl took a biscuit, bird came onto hand, was very tame, so we put it in the cocky's cage, which was already there. This was a very friendly little bird. Approximately a year later, the bird started talking: 'Hullo Georgie Porgie – Georgie Porgie.' Eureka! We knew his name. Georgie was such a sweet natured bird, loved to be held, and all the family and friends made a

fuss of Georgie. Again, approximately a year later, we couldn't believe our eyes – an egg! Then, of course, Georgie became Georgina! Mark was very fond of her. Whenever he came for a few days, he carted her around, gave her treats, brought her inside, sat her on the back of his chair, and she was so good. Yes, we all loved her and she adored Mark. Eventually we let Georgina out occasionally and she came back at 3pm for her cup of tea (oh yes, she had her own spoon). After awhile she stopped coming, but would swoop over the house, squawking – with a mate! We were all so happy about her being free. To finish off this happy story, friends in Westburn (who feed lots of maggies and other birds) are convinced that one of them is our Georgie. It's smaller than the others, very quiet and friendly and eats out of Jo's hand. ♪

HANDY HEALTH HINTS

BONE FRACTURES AND CARBONATED BEVERAGE CONSUMPTION

A study has shown that there is a link between bone fractures and carbonated drinks. Important bone development can be impeded when too many of these soft drinks are consumed during adolescent years and this can later lead to osteoporosis. Young girls who drink soda are three times more likely to develop bone fractures. ♪

HONEY HEALS

Many *Grass Roots* readers have already discovered this one, but it's good to

know the professionals agree. A clinical trial in Nigeria found that unprocessed honey could heal wounds when conventional medicine failed. Honey contains an antibacterial agent called inhibine and is slightly acidic. It absorbs water, and this may be why it is able to reduce swelling in wounds. The three-year trial found topical application kept wounds sterile, and infected wounds became sterile within a week. Honey was effective in treating 58 of 59 patients for wounds and ulcers. Honey could also be used to remove dead tissue from persistent wounds, which may help to avoid amputations or skin grafts. ♪

PREGNANCY IN SPORT

Sports Medicine Australia has a fact-sheet on pregnancy in sport. It is available from www.sma.org.au ♪

PREGNANCY AND MERCURY

Pregnant women are advised by the Australia New Zealand Food Authority to limit their consumption of certain fish as foetuses are sensitive to mercury. Consumption of shark, ray, swordfish, orange roughy, ling, gem fish, southern bluefin tuna, barramundi and freshwater fish caught in geothermal waters should be limited to 150 grams per week. ♪

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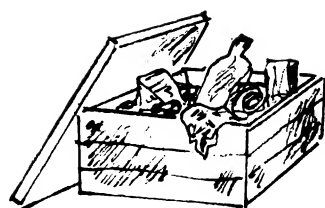
PRI operates Permaculture Design Certificate courses, on-ground training camps and Strawbale housing courses. For more details view our website or contact us directly:

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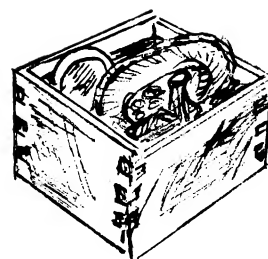
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Moving Mountains



by Judy Witney, Lardner, Vic.

The move was chaotic. In spite of enlisting the services of an extremely efficient removalist, there still seemed to be mountains of stuff that had to be transported by car. Sheds and cupboards surreptitiously bred extra paraphernalia, to grin smugly when opened as they exposed their forgotten contents. We began by painstakingly marking boxes with their exact contents and keeping kind with kind. By the end, things were unceremoniously stuffed into any available space. Consequently, upon reaching our destination, items which you reach for automatically, like can openers and teaspoons, had simply disappeared, rendering meal preparation a nightmare. And this was just the household gear: the farm stock and implements were something else again.

Sheds, which had seemed to hold very little, regurgitated an endless supply of articles, too useful to throw away but not really needed. What to do with them? As for the real rubbish, we filled three hoppers and still had bags of stuff we didn't want.

I managed to reduce my poultry by half from 90 head to 45, but still had to make three trips with a station wagon full of agitated chooks. To add insult to injury, they were then bundled into unfamiliar sheds with scant regard for social groups to which poultry are so attached. Normality should return when extra pens are erected, but in the meantime they will just have to cope.

The horse, transported by a friend, had the most trouble-free move of all of us, adapting to her new surroundings with wide eyes but barely a murmur, as long as her breakfast and dinner continued to be delivered.

The two cats are still unsettled a fortnight after our arrival. When outside, they turn into feline creatures with long rubber necks as they nervously look around. At Healesville they could



escape under the house when in need of security; here they have no such bolt-hole and are finding everything rather overwhelming.

After the removalist had taken our furniture, I had allocated two days for tidying up and arranged for the carpets to be professionally shampooed on day three, when the house was empty. Such illusions! On day five we were still going back, tiptoeing across the clean carpets in socks, to empty yet another cupboard. At dusk we would pack the cars and head off to our new place, an hour and a half away. On arrival we were too exhausted to eat, which was just as well as there was little food in sight.

The final two days saw the cars loaded to the roof with plants, pictures, farm tools, books, clothes and groceries. You couldn't change gear without getting snagged on a rose, and the rear vision mirror was unusable. Just as well we had side mirrors.

Amid this frenetic activity we somehow had to come to terms with saying goodbye to a property we had created, which had served us well for eighteen years and was full of memories of family life.

We have now been at our new property exactly two weeks. This period has not been without incident either. The phone, the connection of which had been organised well in advance, refused to work. After a week of no phone and no action, I contacted the Telecommunications Ombudsman who

gave me the number of a Telstra officer who has been helpful, but also foiled by our situation. After having no phone we were finally connected, the only hitch being that the serviceman used someone else's line which left them without one. That hurdle was negotiated, but we now find we share our number with a resident at the end of our road, which is creating significant confusion. I can hardly wait to inform my Telstra helper of this latest development! At least it's one way of meeting your new neighbours.

Our mail, too, disappeared for a time into a black hole, until I received a call from our mail contractor who informed me we had a box full of mail a kilometre away at the end of our road.

In spite of these hiccups, we are beginning to feel more settled. Nothing beats a cosy fire and a few familiar objects around the place to make you feel at home.

The garage is still full of boxes with mysterious contents, which no doubt we will get around to unpacking in due course. Meanwhile, we are relaxing and exploring our new surroundings. Above all, we are enjoying the luxury of doing things at a pace not determined by arduous deadlines. ♪

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Taking The Measure

by John Mount, Woodford, Qld.

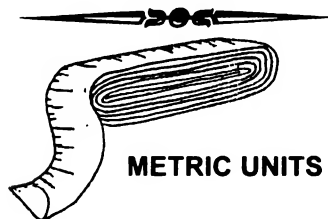
At some time or other we've all had to measure something without having the benefit of a ruler or tape measure. It's no wonder that ever since the year dot, people of many civilisations have used parts of the human body to measure various items such as cloth, liquid, salt etc.

For example, one particular measurement was the royal cubit, a measurement usually taken from the tip of the king's (the ruler's) middle finger to the centre of the elbow joint, which was around 445 millimetres. Longer measurements were taken from the outstretched arms, from the tips of the middle fingers across the chest, which is usually taken today as roughly 1830 millimetres. Salt and other substances of a similar consistency were often measured by the handful, either a single cupped hand or two hands placed together.

A handy measurement for the trades- or handyperson is the span; this is taken from the tip of the middle finger to the tip of the thumb. Which is close to 230 millimetres. With a simple ruler and a little experimenting you will find other parts of your anatomy close to an exact measurement. Following are some other old measurements that might come in handy:

HECTARES TO ACRES

To roughly convert hectares into acres, double hectares and add half. For example, to convert 2 hectares into acres: $2 + 2 + 1 = 5$ acres. ♣



We love receiving your *Grass Roots* articles to publish, but please remember to use metric units when detailing weights and measures. It will save us heaps of time and ensure your instructions are followed accurately. ♣

MEASURES OF LENGTH

	Imperial	Metric
1 palm	4 in	10 cm
1 hand	4 in	10 cm
1 link	7.92 in	20.11 cm
1 span	9 in	23 cm
1 cubit	17½ in	445 mm
1 pace	2½ ft	76.2 cm
1 geometrical pace	5 ft	1.52 m
1 fathom	6 ft	1.82 m
1 cable's length	608 ft	185.3 m
1 league	3 miles	1.609 km

MEASURES OF COIN WEIGHT

	Imperial	Metric
5 cents	43.6 grains	2.834 g
10 cents	87.3 grains	5.674 g
20 cents	174.6 grains	11.349 g
50 cents	240 grains	15.6 g

OVEN TEMPERATURES

Fahrenheit			Celsius		
Gas	Elec	Temperature Description	Gas Dial	Gas	Elec
140	140	plate warming	0	60	60
175	175	keep warm	¼	80	80
210	230	cool	½	100	110
250	250	very slow	1	120	120
300	300	slow	2	150	150
320	340	mod slow	3	160	170
355	390	moderate	4	180	200
375	430	moderately hot	5	190	220
390	445	hot	6	200	230
445	480	very hot	7 - 8	230	250

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NATURAL MEDICINE

Correspondence courses written by
Isaac Golden, PhD, D. Hom.

Principal of the ACHH
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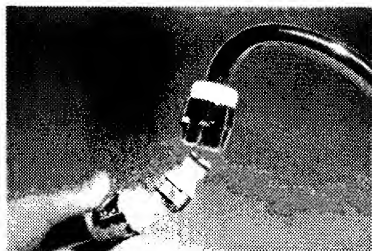
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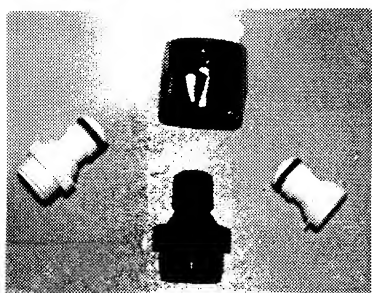
We hope you enjoy this feature introducing new products relevant to readers' lifestyles and interests.



SINK TAP CLICK-ONS

Three connecting devices click on to a chrome receptor that has been screwed onto your sink taps in place of the normal aerator. One connector can be fitted to your garden hose; another to any hand shower and the last one is a swivel aerator. These provide a versatile range of options and, for convenience, the chrome receptor can stay permanently on the tap. For example, the garden hose can be attached to the sink tap and warm water channelled outside to wash the dog or clean the barbecue. The Sink Tap Click-Ons are available at hardware and plumbing supply outlets for about \$14.95.

For more information contact:
Handi Home Supplies, 50
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3074, ph: 03-9466-1611.



ECOTRAP

Unlike other animal traps, Ecotrap relies on entanglement to trap the feral or native animal, rather than jaw-clamp, snare or solid metal cage. Ecotrap comprises a flexible metal frame and netting and/or bag which collapses over the animal when triggered. This trap is lightweight (4.5 kilograms) and any number of traps can be stacked together with other traps, with each trap collapsing to a minimum height of 10 centimetres. Ecotrap is humane too, which means that native animals remain unharmed. Unlike other traps, it is soft walled and the frame loses tension as it collapses, so the trapped animal is unlikely to be injured. Ecotrap is easy to camouflage, with no floor and only one wall being visible when set in position. The bag and netting are removable and replaceable. The Ecotrap has been used to trap feral and domestic dogs and cats, as well as introduced birds and rabbits.

For more information contact: Ecotrap, PO Box 2009, Rowville 3178, ph: 0418-177-648, or visit the website at www.ecotrap.com

HONDA EU10I GENERATOR

The Honda EU10i Generator was the first choice for the Australian Army Alpine Association's Tenix Everest 2001 Expedition during their recent ascent of the world's highest peak. This was because it is light, capable of working at and above 3000 metres and has a pathway to allow the carburettor to be rejected for efficient operation at heights above 3000 metres. They even had the generator running extremely well at 6400 metres, having only expected 40 percent efficiency. The team used the generator to recharge batteries for UHF radios, plus the computers and satellite telephones too. With the high altitudes reached, the team found spark plugs and oil had to be changed every two to three days. It's a tough and reliable generator suitable for a range of applications.

For more information contact: Honda Australia Motorcycle and Power Equipment Pty Ltd, Private Bag 19, Somerton 3062, ph: 03-9270-1111.

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The WesternPort Worms worm farm is unique in the way the timber is fully screwed together (no nails or staples are used). Perspex slides come with the farm to provide easy access to rich castings. The farms come in kit form or fully assembled and the range includes five sizes, from a 150-litre capacity farm to 700-litre capacity. The gaps between the timber boards provide enough air, but the farm should be placed in permanent shade and on dirt so that excess water from the 10 litres watered into the farm each week can drain away.

For more information contact: Westernport Worms,
PO Box 229, Warburton 3799, ph: 03-5966-2091 or
0407-054-970.

SIBERIAN TOMATOES

These tomato plants are exciting in that they do not require high temperatures to set fruit like other plants. They are frost resistant and produce juicy, flavoursome, smooth, round fruit that is up to a quarter-kilogram in size. The seeds were brought to North America from Russia and have become popular in Alberta where there is a growing season of between 90 and 100 frost-free days. Extra early yields would be possible for us here and the fruit is ideal for eating fresh or can be used in cooking, sauces, juices or puree. Prices start at \$9.90 for two seeds, plus postage and handling.

For more information contact: Gardeners' Pride,
Locked Bag 5, Terrey Hills 2084, ph: 1800-121-821.

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Envioweeder is a nonselective herbicide formulated in Australia as a new class of ready-to-use, contact-type herbicide that isn't going to harm anyone. It is a nontoxic alternative to certain common traditional grass and weed killers. This is a safe product with minimal health and environmental impact which will appeal to the increasing numbers of people who suffer from multiple chemical sensitivities or past toxic exposure, and those who are suspicious of synthetic and novel chemical agents. Envioweeder is registered with the National Registration Authority as a Group K Herbicide and approved for general weed control in domestic areas, commercial, industrial and public service areas, agricultural buildings and other farm solutions, and pasture situations. It can be used in drought conditions when systemic chemicals are not as effective. The product is highly biodegradable and leaves no residual toxins in the soil. Its primary active ingredient is sodium chloride (sea salt) which starves the plant of moisture following contact. It is also known to be a soil conditioner and fertiliser. Phasing out the use of chemical herbicides can have an impact on pollution problems and therefore on environmental health, but Envioweeder offers a new benchmark for the ethical use of agricultural chemicals in Australia.

For more information contact: Alistair Willis, Nontox Environmental Solutions Pty Ltd, PO Box 579,
Nambour 4560, ph: 0417-461-428.

RECENT RELEASES

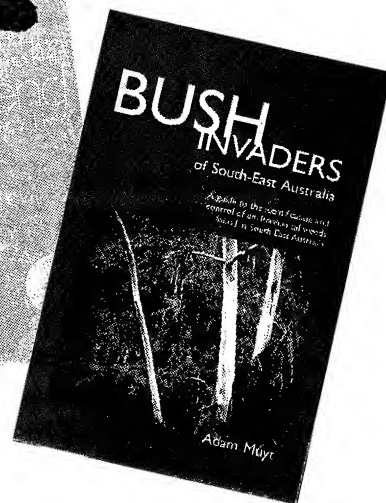
Titles described can be ordered through your nearest bookstore.

A GIRL'S BEST FRIEND THE MEANING OF DOGS IN WOMEN'S LIVES

Jan Fook & Renate Klein (Eds)

This is a moving collection of stories, poems and autobiographical pieces that illustrate the significance of various women's relationships with dogs. Eighty-six women and girls celebrate the laughter and tears of having dogs in their lives, not just as pets, but as friends and lifelong companions who provide understanding and love every day. Stories touch upon many special dog qualities: their sixth sense, their loyalty, their gentleness with the sick, their playfulness with children; and illustrate the important role our canine friends play in sharing the journey and their strength with us. Contributors include authors, poets, academics, activists, artists and politicians, for example: Judy Horacek, Moira Rayner, Meg Lees, Susan Hawthorne, Donna Jackson and Robyn Rowland.

S/b, 209pp, Spinifex Press, PO Box 212, North Melbourne 3051. Ph: 03-9329-6088. RRP \$32.95.



FARM DAMS

PLANNING, CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE Barry Lewis

Dams have always been an integral feature of rural properties. A failed or poorly planned dam can be a costly and time-consuming problem to fix, and there has long been a gap in relevant information available to assist with proper design and construction of farm dams. This publication provides a practical approach and guide for prospective dam owners and offers essential information on all types of earth dams. The main sections look at planning, construction and maintenance, but other detailed sections include design, investigation, ecology, documentation and water, as well as possible legal and commercial aspects of such projects. Helpful diagrams, charts and photographs pepper the text. Lewis is an engineer with over 30 years experience and has written extensively on all facets of the subject. Today he is involved in licensing and regulating farm dams

P/b, 152pp, CSIRO Publishing, PO Box 1139, Collingwood 3066. Ph: 1800-645-051. RRP \$49.95.

BUSH INVADERS OF SOUTH-EAST AUSTRALIA

Adam Muyt

This is the first field guide that both identifies serious invasive plants and offers comprehensive details on their removal in a single publication. The problems environmental weeds pose to the region's indigenous flora and fauna are outlined in chilling detail and serve to reinforce the need for action. The summary of underlying management and control techniques, as well as the principles on which these are based, is comprehensive. Muyt covers management issues, control and removal methods, and gives detailed descriptions of over 150 species, subspecies, varieties and hybrids, all accompanied by more than 250 colour photographs. His direct experience in conservation and restoration projects such as Merri Creek and Yarra Bend in Melbourne have allowed him to develop practical, hands-on methods for environmental weed control and management.

P/b, 304pp, RG & FJ Richardson, PO Box 42, Meredith 3333. Ph: 03-5286-1533. RRP \$59.95.

NATURAL HIGHS

Patrick Holford & Dr Hyla Cass

Throughout the ages people have used mind-altering substances, some of which are extremely harmful and addictive, not to mention illegal. The authors' research delves into the latest scientific advances in brain chemistry, and also into the ancient herbs used by tribal people in the Amazon, Africa and Pacific Islands. They have studied plants such as kava kava, the reputed reason why Pacific Islanders are so laid back, and scelletum, used by bushmen in the African deserts to keep them connected with nature. By combining such substances with amino acids, the building blocks of the brain's neurotransmitters, they have come up with natural, healthy ways to increase energy, sharpen the mind, improve mood, relax, beat stress and promote a sense of connection. Other practices like meditation, biofeedback and exercise are detailed, together with a helpful appendix on breaking the cycle of addiction.

P/b, 318pp, Hodder Headline, 22/201 Kent Street, Sydney 2000. Ph: 02-8248-0800. RRP \$34.95.

GOOD NEWS FOR A CHANGE HOPE FOR A TROUBLED PLANET

David Suzuki & Holly Dressel

Well-known environmental writers, Suzuki and Dressel, whose previous work has enlightened the world about the catastrophic state of the environment, have discovered that all is not quite so bad after all. There is no cause for complacency, but worldwide, changes are underway – changes in attitude and changes in practices – that are good news for the environment. Individuals, groups and businesses – fishermen in Mexico, remote villagers in India, tribal Indians in America, avid recyclers in Germany, giant corporations, family-run firms and a host of others from all nations and walks of life – are finding ways of living (and conducting business) within the limits of the environment, or of reducing their environmental impact. Their amazing and uplifting stories prove that fishing, forestry and farming can be sustainable, that business can have a social and an environmental conscience and still be profitable, that the democratic process can empower us all to make a difference to our world.

P/b, 398pp, Allen & Unwin, PO Box 850, Crows Nest 2065. Ph: 02-8425-0100. RRP \$29.95.



DOWN HOME ON THE FARM

by Megg Miller.

I heard it when I walked down to close the gate late in the evening. The unmistakable sound of trickling water. And not the drip, drip, drip of a tap, more like a container overflowing. 'Oh no,' I groaned out aloud. I'd forgotten to turn off the tap at the tank this morning. For 14 hours the water had trickled into the goose wading pond and over the sides, effectively emptying the 3000-gallon tank. I could see the reflection of the moon mirrored in the sheet of water that spread for metres in the dry paddock. To add insult to injury I'd been home for several hours but hadn't gone near the paddock. An earlier discovery of the muddy mess would have meant less water wasted, especially as the tank had only just been filled and I hadn't even received the account. You only slip up once, I reminded myself, but slept fitfully that night, beset by dreams of thirsty geese beseeching me for water.

This wasn't a situation that looked better in the light of day. The tank was all but empty and while I did have a full 1000-gallon tank it's usually kept for emergencies. It's been an unbelievably dry summer and autumn and the dam I've used for water for the livestock in the past naturally has stayed dry as a bone. Other dams in the district that are filled by run-off and minor flash flooding are just as dry. One or two light showers have made autumn ploughing easier for the local farms, but amounted to little in terms of storage water. As a cruel irony, the skies bucketed down on the GR office ten days ago, causing streets to flood and threatening houses and shops. It was late afternoon and a power blackout caused by the storm forced me from my desk and out into the twilight. Lordy, I thought, I'd better get on home.

The heavens rumbled and fireworks in the sky lit up the countryside, but not a drop fell at home. I felt particularly miffed as I'd risked life and limb in the rush, even forgetting my handbag and the cats' dinner in the fridge, and for what? Definitely not rain! Maria the dog was pleased, especially as she's terrified of thunder and pants and hyperventilates with fear, so at least I

could comfort and assure her that all things pass. Poor old doggie; there have been a few thunderstorms and I swear she's getting more upset with each one. One of the neighbours prophesied several months of dry, breaking possibly at the end of May. He's been right to date, so let's hope we get rain and not just electrical storms in the next few weeks.

The long dry period has tested the resilience of trees and shrubs as well as garden plants. It's also caused a big dust problem around the poultry houses. Feeding the birds each morning is an arduous task, but the dust everywhere sets my nose running so that I'm blowing all the time and then coughing like a long-time smoker. 'You have to wear a mask all the time,' the doctor sagely advised. 'Those birds of yours will get used to it.' He was right on both counts. The nose blowing has stopped, the cough is less severe and the geese are settling down. The chooks and turkeys look no higher than the feed bucket and are quite forgiving

of changes of attire and headwear. I hope this will nip in the bud any bronchial damage and minimise the demands of the doctor's second strategy for reducing the coughing.

Looking me square in the eye this optimistic practitioner said, 'You must wash your bed linen every day, and your doona cover every week. Wash in hot water and rinse in warm, this is very important. And your doona and pillows . . .' My agonised expression halted further advice. Wash every day, use all that water when even the hot water bottle water is reused. As for hot water, well, it's nonexistent. At my place we shower in cold water, quickly, and with minimum use of water. There is no doubt I can lift my housekeeping standards and vacuum more regularly and change bed linen frequently, but, as the allergy only occurs outdoors, the daily bed linen boil-up will have to wait for the proverbial rainy day. Did I receive sympathy from my darling daughter over this confronting predicament? No. She laughed! 'I've been



Part of the cottage perennial garden at my town block, lots of silver-leaved species to withstand dry weather plus layers of cardboard and straw to retain precious moisture.

telling you for years you're too casual with your cleaning. Now look what's happened. You can use my place to do your washing, but no wasting water.' Perhaps if I wear the mask all the time at home, inside and out, I won't need to spend hours each day relocating the dust mites.

Joking aside, it is hard finding extra time for big jobs when you work away from home. The daily schedule is pretty flat chat now, particularly since I started to cook rice and vegies for the dog. Maria is over 11 and really feeling her age and for a while stopped working. No running after foxes at night, no barking, just a dull-eyed old dog. I'll tempt her with some wholesome fare, I thought, and it has picked her up. Now at night she's waiting to see if it's fettucini, brown rice or couscous, and whether or not there are orange or green vegies. A dollop of plain yoghurt, kelp granules, brewers' yeast, some meat every few nights, what more could an old dog want? It's a pain when I've been at a meeting or stayed back to work, her meal still has to be prepared, despite the late hour. At the same time it is a labour of love because this dog has unstintingly worked for fully 11 years keeping predators at bay. One day, I know, I'll get the plastic storage containers mixed and eat her dinner by mistake. Could that make my bark worse than my bite?

Years and years ago when I used to mash up boiled egg and add chopped parsely and chives to it for tempting the newly hatched turkey poults to start eating, a friend did gobble up their food. I'd just prepared a large bowl of this 'chick starter' and it was warm and emitting appetising smells. Setting it aside to cool, I went out to finish some jobs. I came inside half an hour later and the friend sheepishly apologised. 'Hope you don't mind but I finished off the mashed eggs. I wasn't sure if you left them for my breakfast. They were great on toast with lots of salt and pepper.' The mixture had smelt like good tucker as I prepared it so what could I say to the talkative turkey who had just consumed the lot? A philosophical shrug and silence was the most suitable response. To this day I feel uneasy when I eat egg sandwiches at rural functions, wondering if in fact the person making them wasn't rushing around doing a dozen jobs and slipped up with the fillings.

I would have been better off if I'd found and collected more eggs for making fillings and cakes than I allowed to amass under broody hens. The last chicken for autumn has hatched, thank goodness, though only last week I threw a couple of would-be sitters out of nests and closed off the entrances. Culling of the spring hatches has commenced, and a couple of large orders for layers are awaiting completion. An acquaintance came to collect geese one night recently and went off with the geese he had ordered plus five aged purebred hens. They were lovely old girls and would be an asset in the breeding programme he had planned. I was pleased as it was five less to feed. 'There are another couple right up in the trees. I'll catch them and you can have them too,' I promised.

When the chooks and the dust get me down I go over to my block in town and garden. Mostly I see the plants by torchlight now because of the short days, but the array of colours and shapes never fails to gladden my heart. I should be making inroads into the vegie garden, but the need to keep up the watering of perennials and herbs had introduced an element of caution. Wait till the weather breaks. A practical step was purchasing and potting a range of seedlings about two months ago. They should be ready to transplant right now, but all the brassicas have been severely attacked. There are no telltale shiny trails of slugs or snails, nor are there caterpillars on them. They are over at home in chook crates (for protection) and I'm sure the birds are not able to reach in and judiciously 'prune'. Suni is asking for her share of seedlings and can't believe they're leafless. All I can think is that a starving native rat or similar has got to them. It's very puzzling and disappointing.

If you think I spend all my time toing and froing you're right. Some weeks I even begin to feel a little weary. So after almost three years of thinking, planning, procrastinating and avoiding anything remotely like a firm decision, I've suddenly decided to go ahead and have some renovations done in the funny old cottage that was part of the town block. It's very small and pokey and has the distinction of a brick floor in the kitchen. There are innumerable stages to traverse before the

cottage becomes habitable and an army of decisions, but the renovation process has finally started. I look forward to telling you all about it but be prepared, at the present rate of progress it could take forever. ☘



PENPALS

Hi, my name is Traci. I am 10 years old. I like all animals, reading, writing and receiving letters and more. I live on a farm and play the clarinet and recorder. I am looking for a girl penpal aged 9 to 11 with the same interests.

Traci (GR151)

C/- PO Box 117, SEYMOUR 3661.

Hi everyone! My name is Lesley, and I'm a stay-at-home mum. I devote my time to looking after my family. I've been married to Peter for six years and we have two wonderful boys, Dylan four and Daniel two. We enjoy raising our boys in a happy and healthy environment. I love to cook, garden, sew, knit, crochet and read.

Lesley Ashley

21 Fremantle Rd, SUNBURY 3429.

Hi, my name is Candice Kramme. I have two sisters, Cindy and Melanie. I would like a penpal aged between 7 and 11. I am 8 years old. I live on a farm, my family has bulls, cows, sheep, dogs, horses and a cat. Our dog just had pups at Easter. We have 130 acres. I would love to have a penpal.

Candice Kramme (GR151)

C/- PO Box 117, SEYMOUR 3661.

LARGE BLACK PIGS



The perfect breed for
free range.

You read about them in
GR141 and we have piglets
available year round.

Ph: 03-5768-2225

GRASSIFIEDS

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Sender's Name For issues no/s
 Address Classification
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Cost for advertisements is 85c per word

PROPERTY FOR SALE

NEW SOUTH WALES

PRIVATE TWO-ACRE SHARE with forest, bush tucker, beautiful views, waterhole. Clear, fertile soil for gardening. House site prepared. Rough cabin with telephone, solar, gas hot water, spring water. 50 km NE of Lismore. \$27,500. Contact Owen: gorigby66@yahoo.com

BENDEMEER, 41 km nth of Tamworth. Responsible couple wanted to look after & maintain sml part-furnished house & grounds. Large garage, f/trees & garden. River frontage. References please. Ph/fax: 02-4787-1754.

BEAUTIFUL HIGH COUNTRY, 7 ac red basalt soil, fantastic views with north-east aspect over valleys and distant mtn ranges at Guyra, 25 mins from Armidale. Winter snow & beautiful summers. One b/r steel-frame cottage, town water + tank & well, power, ph & LP gas, composting toilet. Also tool shed & double garage, gardens. Two ac planted with 2 yr old organically grown apple trees – all old & rare varieties with inground watering. Over 100 native shrubs for cut flowers incl proteas & waratahs. Back boundary adjoins reserve. \$105,000. Ph: 02-6779-2726.

BORDER RANGES World Heritage area north-em NSW, 5 ac on 330 ac regenerating forest community, great views, house site, shed, tank, sml dam, ph connection, primary school at entrance. Steiner school nearby, close to Nimbin, Lismore & Kyogle. No cats or dogs. \$19,990. Ph: 02-6689-7584 before 8pm.

GLOUCESTER, 66 ac, river frontage, stunning views of 'Bucketts' along private rd 2 mins to town. Open plan 2 b/r relocatable home, gas/petrol generator, 5000 gal tank, approved equestrian school & camp ground, 22 ft Lakota tipi. Set up for income from home. Private sale: \$225,000. Ph: 02-6374-2123.

Email: hmandan@winsoft.net.au

NEAR COPMANHURST, 113 ac + home, 45 km NW of Grafton. Fully fenced with frost-free tropical orchard, approx 15 ac cleared, rest natural bush. Three-bay shed with enclosed room, 2 b/r split level timber home with ofire, gas appliances, water pump, generator, solar panels, batteries & inverter. Rain & spring water servicing house & gardens. \$150,000 ONO. Ivan, ph: 02-6647-3264.

TABULAM 35 KILOMETRES, Clarence River frontage, 1/2 share, 6250 ac registered company, 20 ac own use, 2 b/r timber house. Large kitchen, big verandahs, sheds, stables, chook pens, orchard, dams, 5000 gal tank, solar power. \$75,000. Ph: 08-9530-3445.

FAR NORTH COAST NSW, 1 ha on perm crk near Etttrick, 20 km from Kyogle, 30 km from Casino. Two old sheds, ph, power, water tank. \$42,000 ONO. Ph: 08-8981-1238.

TWEED/BYRON BAY AREA, 3 b/r home, r/forest, 20 ac, \$126,000. Ph: 02-6679-3254. Website: www.properties.aunz.com/nsw

FAR NORTH COAST, mountain-top property (500 m), spectacular 300° views to Mt Warning, Lismore & Byron, 100 ac, 10 cleared. Four b/r, 2 bathroom lge home. Solar panels. 12 m x 9 m shed. Urgent sale \$230,000. Ph: 0408-363-371.

MID NORTH COAST, 119 ac, 37 km west of Nambucca Heads. Rural upper catchment with building approval. Recent earthworks incl driveway, dam, housesite & firebreaks. Permanent crk, well timbered with pockets of r/forest. \$69,000. Ph: 02-6568-8292, or 0438-688-215.

TWENTY-FIVE TRANQUIL ACRES, 40 km north of Bathurst, 2.5 hrs from Windsor/Richmond, with building permit. Views all the way to Bathurst & beyond. Never supered, suit organic. The block is fenced, undulating to steep, has a dam, & ph & elec are avail. \$54,000. Ph: 02-6332-5965 BH, 02-6337-7749 AH.

NEW ENGLAND TABLELANDS: Renovated 3 b/r old style cottage with s/c/stove & wood heater. Panoramic views on 583 ha bushland of which only 1/3 cleared. Freehold. Permaculture garden & orchard. Annual rainfall 36", 77,000 litres rainwater storage, 9 dams, springs. Mains power, school bus at gate. One hr drive to Inverell or Armidale. \$210,000 ONO. Ph: 02-6723-7222.

DRAKE, UPPER CLARENCE VALLEY, 17 ac f/hold, granite soil, excel fences, pasture & hardwood forest, 2 dams, pump, sheds & yards. Comfortable 1 b/r house, solar power, gas/wood stoves/HWS, refrig, SC heater, septic toilet. Low rates. Mild climate. Stock & plant incl. \$59,000 ONO. Owner retiring. Ph: 02-6737-6824.

TWELVE ACRES, SOME BUSH, great views, 20 mins to Pambula/Merimbula, 1 1/2 hrs to snow. \$40,000 ONO. Ph: 02-6494-2193.

BOMBALA, 4 b/r house on 4 ac, 5 mins from school, club & shops, 1 hr to coast, 1 hr to snow. \$90,000 ONO. Ph: 02-6494-2193.

GRASSIFIEDS

PROPERTY FOR SALE

NEW SOUTH WALES

COONABARABRAN AREA, 1140 ha. Working farm ideal for ecotourism, with lge area native flora & fauna. Comfortable homestead with wood fire, 4 b/rs, 2 bathrooms. Machinery, hay & shearing sheds, yards etc. Near Warrumbungle & Coolah Tops Nat Pks & Goonoo State Forest. Could take stock on agistment. POA. Ring Jen, 02-6844-1413.

DRAKE, 1/8 share 1000 ac virgin timbered country, secluded, best reasonable offer. Ph: Robert, 02-6226-4773.

QUEENSLAND

LAND FOR SALE - CHEAP! Thirty-six ha of unspoilt bush, perm water & a dam, 15 mins west of Gin Gin, approx 1 hr from Bundaberg. \$45,000 ONO. Ph: Rick, 0427-599-518.

MARYBOROUGH TEN MINUTES, renovated 3 b/r home + granny flat on 50 ac native woodland. Dam, pump, chook pen, sheds, f/trees, dble c/port, fenced, ample water, wildlife. \$145,000. Ph: 07-4122-4546.

UNIQUE LIFESTYLE PROPERTY: Tropical nth Qld (Tully/Cardwell), 71.32 ha (176 ac) prime pasture improved cattle country. Joins World Heritage r/forest & King Ranch. Large country home in superb tropical garden setting. Permanent reticulated pure water from mtn streams, many tropical f/trees, carry 70 head - yards & crush. Tourism potential. Genuine sale at \$395,000. Contact Tropical Queensland Realty, ph: 07-4068-0900. Email: hhlb@bigpond.com

NOOSA FORTY-FIVE MINS, 5 ac with lge dam, house site, fenced, power, level block, good soil, full amenities nearby, can be subdivided. \$35,000 or will consider terms. Ph: owner, 07-5483-1401.

CHILDERS, 300 ACRES fronting river with r/forest & fish. Surrounded by state forest, yet only 10 mins to Childers, on the hwy, 1/2 hr to beach, cities & Fraser Island. Organic farming with irrigation licence, millable timber, 3 phase power, ph & lge shed. Only \$400,000. Ph: 07-4125-3303, or 0418-796-188.

OLIVE GROVE, GIN GIN, 30 ac, 3 b/r, study, redecorated house, 850 olive trees under irrigation, f/trees, sml tractor, 5 dams, bore, seasonal crk. Sixty km Bundaberg. \$200,000. Ph: 07-4157-2085.

COASTAL DEEPWATER, just south of Agnes 1770, open plan approved house, 40 ac. Sheds, combustion + gas stove/hotwater, ph, pumps, fenced. Hardwood stands. NEVER run dry!! dams, seasonal crk, perm billabong. Irrigated orchard & house yard. School bus at gate. Close to nat pks, secluded clean surf beaches, crks, general store 20 km. \$108,000 ONO. www.visionary-synergy.com/myhouse Ph: 07-4156-6556.

DEADLINES: GR152 - JUNE 30
GR153 - AUGUST 31

TEA TREE PLANTATION, 57,000 irrigated tea trees, excel oil, estab sales agent. Country-style 4 b/r brick home, pine walls, sep main b/r with en suite, irrigated f/trees, 4 fish-stocked dams, sheds, tractor, 5 paddocks, 45 mins to Bundaberg, 25 ac bushland. Kids will love it. Unique opportunity at \$179,000. Ph: 07-4157-6574.

FIFTY ACRES POISON-FREE land planted with approx 500 mangos, 100 lychees. 500 longans, high tanks for gravity-feed irrigation. Cleared 14 years ago. Price reduced to \$495,000. DPI have assessed the property and approved asking price as being suitable for income. Will accept a fair offer. Luxury brick home set up as B&B but could suit 2 generations. Friendly, safe area to live, 2 1/2 hr drive north Brisbane. Must sell due to ill health and age, unable to cope with work as a female alone. Ph: 07-4129-2611.

Email: quiltdodge@aia.net.au

Website: www.aia.net.au/quilt

MARYBOROUGH, huge 4 b/r house, bore & dam on 2 ac, 10 mins to CBD. \$120,000. Ph: 0414-541-597.

BEST OF BOTH WORLDS, 11 ac, 2 deeds, lge, renovated Queenslander, solar power & composting toilet. Also, self-contained complex w/phone, mains power, septic. \$180,000. Ph: 07-4156-3330. Email: pheasant2@bigpond.com

BLOOMFIELD, REMOTE FNQ, 3.75 ac, artist studio/dwelling, needs TLC. Loads of character. Dam, bore, ph, elec, close shops, school, river & beach. Established f/trees, pond & waterfall at studio door. \$90,000. Ph: 07-4060-8130 AH.

FOR SALE - EIGHTY ACRES, 3 b/r home, Hardiplank, power, ph, lge 6-bay c/port & shed, school bus avail, 3 x 15,000 gal r/water tanks, sml dam, 2 bores. Irrigation to f/tree orchard. Also features lge shed with shower amenities & bush toilets, situated in valley with water going to camping sites. Thirty km from town. Will consider swap for country home on acreage. \$135,000. Ph: 07-4156-3322.

MILMERRAN, SE Qld, 20 ac, northerly aspect. Top of ridge. Beautiful tree top views, very private, natural bushrock, ironbark trees. Tarred road, ph avail, elec close, 20 mins from town, school, hospital, shops etc. School bus service. \$15,000 - finance avail. Ph: 07-4695-4111 AH.

MACKAY: Lovely country 19 km NE of city. Privacy, breezes, sea view, tropical area. Five ac, fenced, sloping to flat ground, with 11-yr-old unique block home on sml hillside, in 1 ac of 4 levels/gardened park. Wide windows, f/place, 2 b/r + one; compact kitchen, laundry, gas utilities; L-shaped lounge/dining room etc. Big 7 x 5 m slate/timber-floored family room/high ceilings; lge patios/covered pergola areas. Bird aviary/yard; 4 tanks, bore, dam. Sheds, f/trees, sml yards. Reluctant sale. \$175,000. Ph: 07-4959-8835.

MONTVILLE, SUNSHINE COAST, 51 ac of total privacy, 3 b/r solar house on northern slopes. Rainforest, waterfall, crks, dam & grazing. Fruit trees, vegie garden & chicken coop. Needs TLC. Beaches 30 mins, 1 1/2 hrs Brisbane. Long driveway, steep part concreted. \$265,000. Ph: 07-5499-9975.

EUDLO RAINFOREST, environmentally built, architect designed, 4 b/r house. Workshop, 4 x 4 m internal garden, industrial kitchen, wheelchair friendly, fully screened, 25 ac private valley, 2 crks, spring-fed dam, excel soil for permaculture &/or timber forest. \$290,000. Ph: 07-5478-9958.

SOUTH BURNETT REGION, 126 slightly undulating ac, good soil, 20 Mlt water allocation & dam. Three b/r cottage with attached 9 x 12 rumpus, machinery shed & workshop. Handy position to hwy, 5 mins shop/fuel, school bus to gate. \$225,000. Ph/fax: 07-4157-6327.

MT MEE (overlooking folk festival Woodford) - with mountain views to Sunshine Coast, 154 ac natural r/forest, waterfall, millable timber. Large spring-fed dam, farm shed, tractor, good quality 3 b/r home & garage. Fenced paddocks, very private. \$379,000. Ph: 07-5499-0025.

MILLMERRAN, 25 ac untouched bushland, corner block, 20 mins from town. \$15,000. Ph: 07-4695-4104.

STANTHORPE, QLD, AREA, 15.3 ha bush block with solar home, crk, near nat park. Price: \$105,000. Ph: 07-4683-4254.

UP ON A RISE, views of water across to mainland Cleveland Bay, 2 housing blocks in one unit 1040 sqm, lot 110, 30 Bilanbil Drv, Russell Island, no building restrictions/no drainage problems, water & power avail. Surfers Paradise is under 40 km by sea. Excellent value @ \$27,500 ONO. Ph: 07-4055-5731, 0402-216-921.

VICTORIA

WARRACKNABEAL, Vic, built in 1926 from solid brick, this former convent has great business potential. The building has 26 rooms, at least 9 b/rs, 3 bathrooms, a lge kitchen as well as several very lge rooms. On over 1 ac of land, with a concrete tennis court. Only 1 km from the centre of town, town water, r/water, gas heating. Contact: Chris, 03-5352-2837, mobile: 0419-565-953.

EDENHOPE DISTRICT, peaceful, secluded, private, miles of native forest to enjoy, 12 km from town, 105 ac (6 paddocks), 3 b/r renovated home, verandahs, shadehouse, combustion heater, r/c air conditioner, 2 toilets, sep dining. Workshop, sheds, shearing shed, cattle yards, winter crk (fenced, birdlife), 3 dams, 20,000 gal r/water, f/trees (drinker), chicken/dog yards. School bus. \$152,000. Ph: 03-5588-1201.

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GRASSIFIEDS

PROPERTY FOR SALE

VICTORIA

BUSH RETREAT/WEEKENDER or perm get-away. 38 km S/W of Colac. North facing fully furnished 3 b/r house on 2 1/2 ac. Bottle gas lights, hot water fridge (not working) & stove. Phone connected. Perm crk, huge gums, partly cleared. Ige cement water tank, bordered by state forest. Only a few ac to look after, hundreds to enjoy. Just 2 1/2 hrs from Melbourne, 1 1/2 hrs from Geelong in the foothills of the Otways. \$85,000. Ph: 03-5261-7332, or 0427-542-852.

TASMANIA

EAST COAST. TEN HECTARES, very private sheltered block on Four Mile Creek (perm water), 5 km from the sea, with old hut. \$35,000. Ph: 03-6334-5667

WYNWARD: A home with character, surrounded by a beautiful native garden on 1.25 ac. This 3 b/r home has a large lounge with timber features, kitchen-dining with leadlight. Greek tiles & slate floors, attractive bathroom, charming Ige gardens, rural views from patio, garage w/shop, woodshed. Only 15 mins to airport & Wynyard & only another 10 mins further on a scenic sea-side drive to the city of Sumner. Price: \$89,000. Details Ph: 03-6445-4334 after 6pm.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

SANDLETON, RED CREEK SANCTUARY, 325 ac with stone home and bug & pine cottage, 2 ph lines, mains power core, r/water tanks, spacious verandahs & entertainment areas & kangaroos, wombats etc. Price reduced to \$135,000. Ph: 08-8565-2131. For more info & pictures visit website at

<http://www.geocities.com/wombatse/index.html>
Email: wombatbob@ozemail.com.au

SOUTHERN FLINDERS RANGES, 110 yr old school house with attached 4 b/r residence, situated on 5 ac, near Laura & the Wirrabara Forest. Lovingly restored with excel shed space, manicured gardens, functional bore – plenty to appreciate at \$230,000. Ph: Jim on 0419-693-606.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

BRIDGETOWN, WA, 30 ac, absolute peace, privacy, 10 km from town, set up for self-suff. Surrounded by state forest, winter crk, year round waterholes, huge dam with marron. Netted orchard, many other fruit, nut, grapes; fenced vegie gardens. Spacious 2 b/r home, wood fire, solar HWS, new 10,000 gal water tank. Large shed, weekender, plus ATCO demountable, + Ige GP shed, 5 stables/tack-room/feed/yards. Huge equestrian arena. Good paddocks, fences, gates. Listed \$265,000. Contact owner: 08-9761-4619, mobile: 0407-577-585, or agent: 08-9761-2722.

Pictures: www.westnet.com.au/paddock

ARMADALE, Ige homestead in hub of town on 1/4 ac, 4 x 2 big verandah, open fire, French

PLACING AN AD?

See page 77 for details

doors, high ceilings. \$159,000. Ph: 08-9497-1252.

PILBARA RETREAT overlooking the Hamersley Ranges, peace & tranquillity, ideal holiday home or retirement, private sale, Wittenoon WA. Two-storey house, Ige kitchen dining, lounge room, 3 b/bs, 2 bathrooms, ceiling fans, aircons, open living area downstairs. Garden shed, 7500 gal r/water tank. Newly painted outside & well-maintained gardens. Genuine buyers only. \$55,000 ONO. Ph: 08-9189-7018, or 08-9175-5579.

COMMUNITY/SHARES

LAND SHARING CO-OPERATIVE 40 km NW of Taree NSW, 4 – 6 shares for sale in 10 – 12 member estab co-operative, 1259 ac adjoining state forest. Springs, perm water, power, ph, swimming holes, 700 m mtn peak, steep, forested, r/forest pockets, secluded valley, 30 mins to town. \$18,000 for unimproved sites, \$24,000 for improved sites. Ph: 02-6550-7229, or 02-6550-7324.

Email: peakex@tpg.com.au

Website: <http://mo.ontheinternet.com.au>

ANYONE FOR A NONELECTRIC, rural lifestyle? I have the land, if you have the willingness to share work, please write (no phone) to: Kevin Smith, Bingo-Tice Rd, BENAMBRA, Vic 3900.

PROPERTY WANTED

FAR NORTH NSW: Writer seeks mtn or coastal retreat, child & animal friendly, consider share, purchase. Ph: 07-3260-5715.

YOUNG FAMILY SEEKING organic lifestyle & dreams come true, 50+ ac, semi-cleared secluded location. Bordering state/nat pk (pref), with northerly aspect & semi/perm water. Have deposit & income. Under \$100,000. North Vic – nth NSW. Ph: Nadine or Nathan, 0411-096-463, or 0402-003-158.

Email: infinitedirections@bigpond.com.au

SWAP UNIQUE WELL-APPOINTED COTTAGE, sheds, yards, acreage, water, power, ph, SW Qld for similar forest, isolation, coastal/rural NSW, accessible rail/coachline. Ph: Em, 07-4669-4045.

WE ARE LOOKING FOR A HOME on acreage, perm water, NSW area. Vendor finance/rent/ buy. Ph: Debbie, 07-5544-8011.

FOR RENT/CARETAKER WANTED

ACCOMMODATION FOR ACTIVE PEOPLE helping around hobby farm. Write to: Danny, PO Box 95, BALLANDEAN, Qld 4382.

WANTED CARETAKER, duties – chainsaw work & maintenance, roughly 2 hrs daily, c/van & vegetarian meals supplied. \$50 per wk required. Ph: 02-6677-9282.

SHARE FULLY FURNISHED, 2 b/r cottage, Ige garden, walking distance to shopping, train, bus, rivers meet ocean – bowling-yacht-sports-golf-clubs. \$70 pw, long or holiday terms. Coffs Harbour area. Ph: 02-6655-3598.

CARETAKER WANTED, 2 b/r cottage Condobolin NSW in exchange for caring for homestead garden & pets. Suit quiet couple/lady, 20 mins drive to town. Very busy, working farm therefore no drugs, shooters etc. Long-term position. Ph: 02-6895-7636. References required.

SHARE ACCOMMODATION (\$60 per week plus shared costs), likely to suit person of rural background, 34 km to town. Person to share house, extensive vegie gardens & reasonable living expenses on a totally natural & chemical-free organic property (100 ac) on Kangaroo Island, South Australia. Because I have a severe intolerance to chemicals, no artificial perfumes, sprays or scented products of any sort are permitted on the premises. No exceptions as my health is seriously affected by these products. No drugs allowed. If you would like to share both the work of growing much of what you eat + the total satisfaction of an extremely healthy & environmentally sound lifestyle, I would like to speak with you. Plenty of work has gone into establishing productive gardens in an area of very low rainfall & limestone soil. To maintain the gardens and share the workload would require approximately 3 to 4 hours per day from each of us, leaving sufficient time to find paid employment elsewhere on the Island. Local work avail. My interests are sincere & if you are attracted to the opportunity, we could discuss it further. If it seems right, a basic contractual arrangement would be provided. C Pullar-Ford, RSD 117B, Flinders Chase Service, KINGSCOTE 5223.

LANDCARE/ORGANIC BACKGROUND seeks secure rural home within 20 km Ballina, female/kids. PO Box 170, WARDELL 2477. Mobile: 0421-755-721, 02-6683-4313.

MOORAL CREEK, NSW, huge house, long-term rental, school bus, f/trees, crk/swimming, septic, close Bobin. Ph: Troy, 02-6553-4188.

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HOUSE, PEACEFUL SETTING, wanted to rent/caretake/buy, within 1 hr Ringwood, Melb (up to \$130 per week or \$110,000). Loose White, 31 High St Rd, ASHWOOD 3147.

WOMAN, FORTY PLUS, no smoke, drugs, dramas, pets, kids, seeks granny flat/share house, Melbourne bayside, Chelsea/Edithvale or rural setting inland. Modest rent. Housesit considered. Prefer long-term, tranquil, walk to beach! Help with bush regen, organic vegies, child/animal care, nothing strenuous. Great tenant, refs. Any possibilities? Ph: 0407-515-423 (will call back). PO Box 666, MT ELIZA, Vic 3930.

PUBLICATIONS

BOOK 'ABSOLUTELY DELICIOUS LICORICE, how to grow and use', by Isabella Shipard, & licorice sample - \$10. Three licorice roots to grow - \$20, 2 vanilla plants - \$20, 4 curry trees - \$20, 6 betel leaf - \$20. Shipards, Box 66, NAMBOUR 4560. Ph: 07-5441-1101.

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'NIMBIN NEWS MAGAZINE', is a co-operatively run access magazine with articles & information from Nimbin and other areas: We cover concerns relevant to alternative lifestyles & others looking for the most sustainable way. We are one of the longest running alternative magazines & the Nimbin bioregion is at the forefront in the development of sustainable systems. As networkers we scan many mags for suitable & scarce information for our readers. Subscription: 6 issues for \$20, sample \$3.50. Back copies 5 for \$12 posted. PO Box 209, NIMBIN 2480.

STEINER HOME SCHOOLING? A teaching manual by Alan Whitehead on Creativity and Curriculum. Send \$12 to: Golden Beetle Books, Box 329, BLACKHEATH 2785. Ph: 02-4787-5335, fax: 02-4787-5339. Visa-Mastercard.

www.users.bigpond.com/goldenbeetlebooks/

DEADLINES: GR152 - JUNE 30
GR153 - AUGUST 31

BOOKS, OLD AND NEW, send for general list. R Suters, PO Box 127, FIGTREE 2525.

HOME EDUCATION, for info send SAE to: Alternative Education Resource Group, PO Box 461, DAYLESFORD 3460.

BOOKS, NEW AND OLD. Australiana, lifestyle, Pacific, biography, horticulture, gardening, outdoors. Lists avail. BA & JM Wallace, Box 325, PORTLAND 3305.

'NEW VEGETARIAN & NATURAL HEALTH', the magazine of the Natural Health & Vegetarian Societies. Subscribe today, \$30 yearly and receive: 4 vital magazines, discounts at participating health food stores and natural therapies practitioners listed in magazine. Head Office, 28/541 High St, PENRITH, NSW 2750. Ph: 02-4721-5068.

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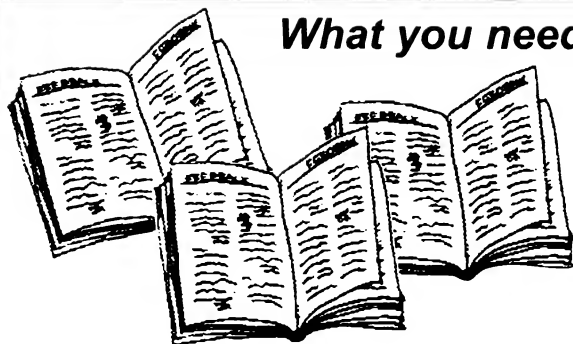
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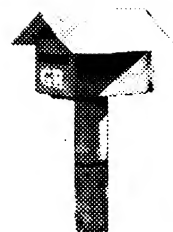
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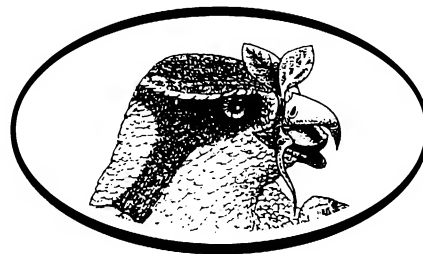
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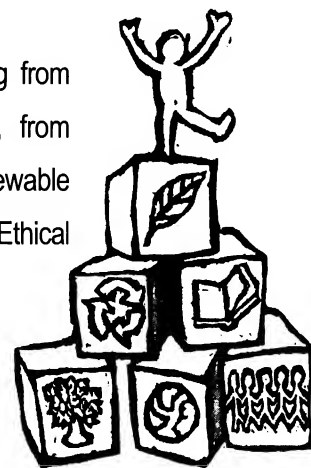
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